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AFTER
MANY
YEARS

and OTHER SKETCHES

By
DAVID GIBSON



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AFTER MANY YEARS AND OTHER SKETCHES

BY
DAVID GIBSON



Cleveland

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TO MY BUSINESS ASSOCIATE
ROBERT E. GAMMEL

*These sketches originally appeared,
for the most part, in the Gibson
magazines, a series of personally
edited monthly publications devoted
to industrial and commercial
sociology, where they were used
in providing variety to more
serious editorial
expression*

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AFTER MANY YEARS

AFTER MANY YEARS.

HE sat in the smoking compartment of a Pullman, chewing the end of an expensive perfecto—a large man of perhaps five and forty. The type that gives one the impression of manual work and privation in early years and luxury and leisure in later life.

The train stopped at a small station where the principal citizens stood about the platform in copper-riveted overalls scratching their shins with their boot-heels.

"I was reared in just such a place," he said. "In a central Indiana town consisting of a drab depot, a red elevator, a hog-chute and a saw-mill, all adjoining a trunk-line railroad track; a public square, a court-house in the center, surrounded by stores of an agricultural district—the hub of the community, with four streets extending in as many directions on which the abodes of man and beast became further apart till they diminished to open roads with green pastures on either side.

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"My father was the one man in the community who, even on week days, wore a black Prince Albert coat, white waistcoat with ivory ball buttons, pleated shirt, stovepipe hat, thin soled shoes, carried a cane and smoked smooth yellow cigars.

"Formerly a farmer — a 'weak-heart' farmer—this imaginary affliction excused him from manual work, justified selling his land and moving into town to become a country justice of the peace.

"A natural, almost phenomenal, mathematician, he occasionally did surveying with an old peep-sight or Jacob's staff transit.

"There was nothing the matter with my mother's heart. Aside from household work, she raised chickens, milked cows, made butter, gave reed-organ lessons and kept a boarder or two, thereby materially assisting my father in maintaining himself in the gentlemanly attire and the dignified idleness of a country squire.

"Many are the times I have seen my mother take her worn hands from a tub of white waistcoats and pleated shirts, and with water wrinkled fingers, pick a quarter from a purse

AFTER MANY YEARS

of her own money to send me to a store for a day's supply of my father's smooth yellow cigars.

"Slight in body, broken in spirit, she 'trode the wine-press alone.'

"To my father's deep chagrin, I did not inherit his mathematical ability—I was deficient as he proficient. Though I more than maintained an average in other studies, he preached to me about industry being a substitute for talent and forced me to study many hours each evening under his tutorage, but my stupidity in even the simple examples of fractions was such that my parental instructor usually closed a lesson with an exhibition of towering rage.

"One day in school the reading class was called. In this study I excelled—I could not only read with understanding, but with feeling. The lesson that day was 'The Death of Little Nell' in 'McGuffey's Fifth Reader.' A certain part of this I could not read without crying. I counted the number of paragraphs, the turns ahead, and found that this would fall to me. My cap was in my pocket. I asked to be excused and ran off for home.

“Unexpectedly I met my father in the doorway. ‘What are you doin’ home at this hour?’ he demanded sternly; ‘school ain’t out yet.’

“ ‘They—they—was readin’ a sad piece in the reader, I—I—was ashamed to cry before the whole school and—and—’

“ ‘Well,’ he shouted, at the same time seizing a narrow flour-barrel stave, ‘guess you ain’t ashamed to cry before me!’

“A cloud of dust arose, there were the shouts of an enraged man, the screams of a child and the resounding blows on a frail body.

“A fourteen-year-old boy emerged from that cloud of dust with love for his father gone forever.

“I ran to my mother, knelt before her, and wept—not with pain but with despair—the injustice, the seeming hopelessness of the condition into which I had been born—father’s insensibility to my finer instincts.

“My mother with her work-worn hands and cold water, smoothed my bodily wounds, but the spirit of revolt arose within me.

AFTER MANY YEARS

"The next day, wandering into the hotel stable yard, I found an old man, standing before a hearse-shaped wagon, gaily painted and divided into many compartments with doors at the sides and end, a buggy-top over the front seat and filled with street-corner merchandise—sold by the light of a gasoline lamp hung on a clothes prop nailed to the side of a drygoods-box rostrum.

"As I was curious the old man showed me through his stock, which consisted of cheap jewelry, 'Dr. Littleton's Lightning Liniment, for Man and Beast'; books—'How to Shine in Society,' 'Funny Stories by Funny Drummers, or How to Entertain Your Customers,' 'Every Man His Own Lawyer,' 'Ready Letter-Writer,' and 'Household Recipes'—how to make baking powder, bluing, paint for a cent a pound, whitewash that wouldn't come off, and how to cure squeaky shoes.

"In one compartment was a box-like machine of galvanized iron—for washing and drying dishes, the old man explained. The dishes were placed on wire racks in a tight box, hot water being forced against them by means of a hand crank-operated rotary fan.

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After cleaning and rinsing the water was drawn off by means of a large faucet at the bottom, and the fan used to blow the dishes dry. He had invented it, he said, for domestic use; had sold a few, but there wasn't much demand, as he expressed it, for wife-saving devices in that country; for men found it cheaper to work their wives to death.

"At this I told my trouble, the old man walked to the rear of the wagon, lowered a rack-life shelf supported by two straps, and gave a suggestive wink.

"From that rack next day I saw the last of my native town. I didn't see my father again until—well—after many years.

"My benefactor was all my father should have been, paying my board wherever we stopped, setting me up with a stock of goods and allowing me the profit on all I sold from house to house.

"We traveled with comfort. The old man traded horses frequently and usually got better animals than he gave; we made money and lived on the best the country afforded.

"After seven years of road life my benefactor fell ill, and realizing that it was his

AFTER MANY YEARS

last bed, executed a bill of sale in my favor for all his possessions, amounting to a few thousand dollars.

"After discharging my employer's last few commissions I planned to visit my family, but did not. By chance I learned that my mother had gone to her first and last rest and my father had remarried.

"Almost from the outset I had seen the possibilities of the old man's dish-washing device, and a complete machine for a model, the casting patterns, a loft, some rough benches, a few tinnerns, and small advertisements in farm and household papers were the beginnings of my industrial existence.



"One day twelve years later I sat in my private office. From the outer general offices came the sound of half a hundred typewriters, a noise like that in a weaving room of a woolen mill; through the acreage of adjoining buildings came the sound of packers' hammers, the roll of hand trucks, the chug of punch presses, the squeak of belts, the

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rattle of casting tumblers, the roar of cupola blasts; the odor of sulphurous gases, hot oil, turpentine and nickel plating chemicals. My cashier entered the room and handed me a check for—well, a very large sum of money. The profits of the years previous had gone for development of the plant, and with the amount of my first dividend before me I realized that I had arrived.

“I looked out of the window and through the cloud of smoke and steam that whirled past, I saw visions of events in those twelve years. I thought of the time that I slept in the shop, cooked my meals, worked at the bench by day and kept books and answered inquiries by night,—wonderful how my mathematics improved when applied to my own dollars and cents: then the period where the demand exceeded the production, and my impatience in the lack of capital for development; then patent litigation—patents are only a license to sue or get sued; then competition and the fight for the survival of the shrewdest.

AFTER MANY YEARS

"Then, in my mental roaming I came unto the more distant past; the drab depot, the red elevator, the hog-chute, the saw-mill; the public square with the court-house in the center and surrounded by stores, the four streets in as many directions on which the abodes of man and beast became further apart till they were open roads with green pastures on either side.

"Then the school, the old Fifth Reader, 'The Death of Little Nell.'

"My mother? She had gone. The old man—my benefactor—likewise. My father, I assumed, was still in the old town.

"Would I go back? No: 'Guess you ain't ashamed to cry before me,' rang in my memory.

"To ease my conscience, though, I wrote, urged him to visit me and enclosed a draft for his transportation.

"Early one morning a western limited rolled into the station. I was at the gate. He came across the tracks. Tall; white hair and beard; stovepipe hat, nap worn off in patches, shirt-pleats torn loose in places; scissors-

AFTER MANY YEARS

trimmed cuffs; ravelled white waistcoat, ivory ball buttons yellow with age; Prince Albert coat faded and frayed, and thin-soled shoes 'invisibly' patched many times. Straight of body, proud in spirit and full of years.

"I opened a campaign of kindness by ordering a good breakfast. Later we repaired to where high-class ready-to-wear clothes were sold, and for his immediate use I bought a fine twill Prince Albert suit. Then a dozen pleated shirts with cuffs attached, a half-dozen white waistcoats, two boxes of collars, one of string ties, a dozen cambric handkerchiefs, a silk hat, and buckhorn-handled cane.

"At the jeweler's, solid gold collar and cuff buttons, a pair of gold nose-glasses, and a shirt-stud and a ring—both set with a diamond of moderate size. At the bank, a roll of new bills for his waistcoat pocket.

"He retired to the hotel where I reside to array himself, and after he emerged from a barbershop—hair cut, beard trimmed and shaved, long silvery locks flowing from under his silk tile—pedestrians turned to look at him.

AFTER MANY YEARS

"During his stay I did all that energy and money could do for his happiness. In a few days, though, he became restless to return—I knew that in reality he wanted to exhibit his acquisitions in the home town, but he had been measured at a merchant tailor's for a black broadcloth suit and a light and a heavy weight overcoat—the latter with a cape fastening in front with elaborate braid frogs. I urged him to wait at least till these were done.

"One morning they were delivered, and I found him before a mirror on a wardrobe door, in my room. He wore the broadcloth suit. By turning and twisting his body and craning his neck he examined the fit, smoothed out imaginary wrinkles and brushed off imaginary bits of dust with the back of his hand.

"I came up to him. 'Here, father,' I said, 'this is something I had forgotten—it will complete the outfit.'

"He opened a leather case and revealed a gold Swiss repeater watch. He examined it, pushed the spring, when its rapid little pulse chimed out the time—the hour—the moment that had arrived—

AFTER MANY YEARS

"After many years.

"His eyes filled with tears. He reached down deep into his coat-tail pocket, pulled out an old red bandana handkerchief and said:

" 'My son, I'm going to cry.'

"I was about to say: 'Guess you ain't ashamed to cry before me,' but—

"I didn't."

HOW GRANDMA CLEANED THE ATTIC

HOW GRANDMA CLEANED THE ATTIC

SHE was about one generation removed from the type that wore black caps and did knitting. Grandma had houses and lands and crisp papers with green printing on them, lived in a big, old, box-corniced house with a daughter, some grandchildren, and a son-in-law who looked after grandma's business—in other words, he did nothing.

Occasionally, grandma assumed control of matters domestic and spoiled her grandchildren at will. Of course the houses and lands and crisp papers with green printing on them were not the only reason she had her way, but they helped some.

About the carol of the first robin, grandma would move uneasily in her chair and say: "There's all them old things up in that attic. If the house would ever ketch fire they would burn us all alive, and they ain't one uv 'em worth shucks. When I clean house I'm a great hand to begin up and go down."

HOW GRANDMA CLEANED THE ATTIC

Early in the morning a few days later would find her, dressed in her oldest gown, at the head of the attic stairs, chin in her hand and looking about in a bewildered way.

Off in the corner her eye fell on an old disemboweled hair-cloth sofa with a cluster of peaches and grapes carved on the back.

She stood silently contemplating it. "There were four chairs went with that sofa," she said to herself. "Yes, there they are," and dragging them out from obscurity she arranged them in a semi-circle. They were the first pieces of furniture of her married life, and she recalled the day when, with her husband, she selected them at old Ambrose Bolin's furniture and undertaking store down at Twinsburg.

Then she turned to a black walnut bureau with a mirror on top—wavy, but as good as they had in its day. She wiped away the dust and looked at herself. Was it her first countenance she saw reflected there? She opened the top drawer, took out a bundle of daguerreotypes, wrapped in a strip of flannel, selected her own from the lot, held it to the

HOW GRANDMA CLEANED THE ATTIC

light and compared it to her present day self in the mirror.

She recalled the time it was taken. A "likeness man" came through the country, stopped at their house and "took" the family for his board and keep.

Grandma found a couple of feather pillows on the floor, thought a soaking rain would do them good, and threw them out the back window into the yard below.

Then she picked up a footstool; it was about to go likewise, when the ear at the side by which she held it came off and it fell to the floor with a loud clank and rattle. She recalled how she had made it to take to church—a cluster of seven fruit cans, filled with rocks and the whole covered with carpet.

By the chimney was a little old trunk, like a stunted figure eight, covered with long goat fur, and on one end three initials formed of brass tacks. She remembered how she disliked to go anywhere with this particular trunk, for it always had a way of smelling in damp weather.

Grandma lifted the lid, burrowed deep among the contents and pulled out a bundle

HOW GRANDMA CLEANED THE ATTIC

in a small shawl. From it she unrolled a tin rattle, a pair of child's shoes, and a dollar of 1818 with a string attached through a hole.

But why did Grandma have the child's shoes wrapped again in cotton batting? A bit of mud between the heel and instep came off in her hand. They were the shoes he wore last time he went out. She fitted the bit of mud back in place again and as she did so a tear fell upon it. Then she looked at all the little dents in the dollar of 1818—they were the marks where he cut his teeth. She picked up the tin rattle, examined it minutely, and—and—yes, she blew the whistle in the handle end. This once distracting noise was now music in her memory.

One of her grandchildren came to the head of the attic stairs to say that lunch was ready, but, of course, Grandma didn't want any lunch that day, and she buried her face deep in the trunk so the child would not see her weep.

There were bundles and bundles of old letters in that same trunk tied with faded blue ribbon—letters with wax seals, before the days of envelopes or postage stamps—letters

HOW GRANDMA CLEANED THE ATTIC

in a copper-plated hand and stilted style: "My Most Esteemed Friend. I take my pen in hand to state to you that I am in the best of health, and hope these few lines will find you enjoying the same God's blessing." Grandma opened bundle after bundle and letter after letter.

It began to rain—the rain fell on the roof and Grandma's tears fell on the pages opened into things of long ago.

About four o'clock Grandma put everything back in the trunk, closed the lid and came down stairs—her hands covered with dust and grime of time and her eyes red with weeping.

She held out a few square inches of figured silk to her daughter and said: "Here is a piece of the vest your father wore the night we were married; I thought I might put it in my next quilt."

And that's how Grandma cleaned the attic.

A TRAGEDY OF PROGRESS

A TRAGEDY OF PROGRESS

GO into your native Indiana town and boyhood home after many years. On the corner of the two principal business streets is a large and comparatively new five-story brick building.

There is a department store below and offices above. On this site there formerly stood a large wooden building, the first floor occupied by a rag, old-iron and general junk dealer who went about the country in a wagon, trading tin and glassware for various kinds of his plunder.

The second floor contained the shop of Jake Kern, the town cobbler and shoemaker, who owned the property.

His bench was in such a position as to command a view of the street leading to the station, and here the editor of the country paper came to get his local items; for old Jake knew everybody that passed in and out of town.

Although he followed shoemaking, he was an all-around mechanical genius, and in a

A TRAGEDY OF PROGRESS

room behind the shop he had a standing bench and the tools of almost every trade.

Once he made a little one-horsepower slide-valve engine and boiler. The cylinder and most of the parts were of Babbitt metal, and the fly-wheel, crank and eccentric were off an old sewing-machine.

A veritable walking encyclopedia and for many years conducted a column in the county paper under the regular caption: "Things to Know."

He came to the town when it was young and out of his savings bought this property when its value was small and price less. For many a long year he pegged away at his little bench, looked out of the window down the street that led to the station, tinkered in the room behind the shop, wrote his "Things to Know" for the county paper, and settled disputes for the loafers.

Somebody struck gas and the town boomed. People remarked: "Rather a dingy old buildin' fer the best business corner in town," and then there were different rumors that different persons had bought it. But the old

A TRAGEDY OF PROGRESS

man vigorously denied them all, pegged away at his little bench, looked out of the window down the street that led to the station, tinkered in the room behind the shop, wrote his "Things to Know" for the county paper, and settled disputes for the loafers.

One day a real-estate agent called at the shop; then an offer of fifteen thousand dollars, but the old man adroitly changed the subject, pegged away at the little bench, looked out of the window down the street that led to the station, tinkered in the room behind the shop, wrote his "Things to Know" for the county paper, and settled disputes for the loafers.

Then came another offer of twenty-five thousand dollars, another of thirty thousand dollars. The influence of his two sons who owned a "shoe emporium" upon the Square was brought to bear.

But the old man pegged on!

Then came two raises of five thousand dollars—each—forty thousand dollars. The two sons opened a perfect broadside of arguments in favor of its acceptance, reinforced by other members of the family.

The pegging stopped!

A TRAGEDY OF PROGRESS

A wagon drove up. The old man's bench and tools and trinkets were loaded in and carried away to the barn behind his house, while the loafers looked on in silence.

The old man came down town every day, looked at the old building as it was being razed, stood at the guard-rail, and watched the men and teams with scrapers digging the cellar and the masons laying concrete and stone foundation-walls. Then he came down only occasionally; when he did it was by another street from where the old shop had stood.

His rheumatism hurt more than usual. His column in the county paper stopped. He quit reading books, took to his bed, and his daughters read the papers to him; later he only asked what was in them, and finally merely for the weather indications.

Occasionally some of the old loafers from the old shoe-shop would come around, sit by the bed awhile in silence, and walk out with their heads bowed down.

There is no more pegging at the little bench. No more looking out the window down the street that leads to the station.

A TRAGEDY OF PROGRESS

There is no more tinkering in the room behind the shop. There are no more "Things to Know" in the county paper. There are no more disputes to settle for the loafers. The old man has gone.

And forty thousand dollars are in the bank.

BILL'S DAY OFF

BILL'S DAY OFF

BILL was a healthy young hulk—a locomotive fireman. By a circumlocution, all the kicks of slow train service resulting from America's industrial activity were heaped on poor Bill's shoulders. The consignee kicked to the shipper, the shipper kicked to the general freight agent, the general freight agent kicked to the superintendent of motive power, the superintendent of motive power kicked to the master mechanic, the master mechanic to the roundhouse boss, the roundhouse boss to the engineer, who in turn threw it all on poor Bill, who shoveled coal harder and harder, and growled and growled.

It had been a long time since anybody had dared think of a day off, and Bill continued to heave coal into "529," "the leaky old kettle," as he called it, while he growled and growled.

Bill growled to the engineer about his day off, and to the other firemen, wipers and hostlers. One day as Bill climbed off old "529," the roundhouse boss happened along.

BILL'S DAY OFF

"Say, Cap," Bill yelled, "how about my day off?"

"Never you mind, you're on," returned the boss. And Bill heaved coal harder and harder, and growled and growled.

Nerved by his first approach, Bill kicked about his day off every time he saw the roundhouse boss, and then began hunting him up.

The date of Bill's day off was finally fixed, but as he climbed in bed the night before, a messenger came with the intelligence that the "extra's" wife's grandmother had died, and he must take his run out that day, so Bill climbed on old "529," shoveled coal, and growled.

A week later the promised day came. Bill rose at the usual time, donned a blue-striped stiff shirt, celluloid collar, and a pair of round, rattling cuffs of the same material, red necktie, blue corkscrew cloth suit, with spring-bottom pants, and a pair of extension-soled shoes.

After breakfast he went across the street to a one-chair barber shop that smelled of cinnamon and clove oil.

BILL'S DAY OFF

"What's the matter, Bill?" asked the barber.

"Got my day off," replied Bill.

After a shave, he remained a while looking at the pictures in *The Police News*, then—his face covered with barber's powder and towel lint—walked over to the roundhouse, took a newspaper from his pocket, spread it out on a greasy pine board bench, and sat down.

"What's the matter, Bill?" said a passing wiper.

"Got a day off." Bill pulled out a yellow paper sack from his pocket and "stoked" upon a combination smoking and chewing tobacco; examined his finger nails, as large as teaspoon bowls, cleaned them with a two-pound jack-knife, which he concluded needed sharpening. After expectorating on a sandstone window sill near by, he whetted his knife till 12 o'clock, then started for the boarding-house.

"What's the matter, Bill; you're all dressed up?" said the boarders in a chorus.

"Got my day off," he replied. After tucking a fringed red napkin down his collar, he

BILL'S DAY OFF

stabbed a piece of fat cold pork with a two-pronged bone-handle fork.

In the afternoon Bill returned to his place on the roundhouse bench and began whittling, as he wondered how "529," the "old leaky kettle," was getting along. At 3 o'clock he consulted his watch. "I was goin' to the op'ry this afternoon, but guess it's too late," he remarked to a passing hostler. Bill pulled a well-packed, greasy and tattered song-book from his hip pocket, containing the words of the latest comic and sentimental songs, and began humming through his nose something about "Mother, Dear," "Gentle Eyes of Blue," and "I'd Leave My Happy Home for You." About 6 o'clock Bill went home.

Amid the dark steam monsters of the road, the clank of hammers, the roar of blasts, and escape of steam; the smell of hot oil, the gas and smoke of the coal from portable repair forges, Bill had spent his day off.

JUST ONE MORNING

JUST ONE MORNING

IT was dawn. A single figure appeared in a deserted down-town street whistling in loud, bird-like notes as he advanced through the purple mist of morning. He stopped before a certain closed door among the many along the way, took from his pocket a key that unfolded like a jack-knife, inserted it, and, as the door opened, there issued into the street a great hot blast of air heavily laden with the blended odors of stale beer, stale cigar smoke, cocktail bitters, lemons, mint, dry oil from the floor linoleum and toilet room disinfectant.

The saloon porter—for that's who it was—disappeared through the interior darkness. There was the clanking of brass cuspidors being piled one above the other; the rattle of buckets, broom and mop handles; a jet of water resounded on a bucket bottom; the porter, hatless and coatless, began the day's duties by mopping the floor, and soon the

JUST ONE MORNING

smell of steaming suds united with the many other odors, all in a grand rush to the street.

The screen door spring creaked, and a seedy little man in thin-soled shoes appeared. With a quick step he pattered to the rail and gave several husky bark-like coughs. The porter looked up from his mopping, wiped his hands on his trousers sides and went behind the bar. The little man nodded. The porter set out *the* bottle and glasses, the little man poured out a "rimmer," raised it with trembling caution, downed it with one backward nod of his head which wagged from side to side as the liquor touched his palate; and a tremor-like shudder descended his fragile frame, which ceased in a series of nasal convulsions as he lowered the glass and blindly reached for the water. After a long, deep breath the little man laid down a dime, which the porter did *not* put in the register drawer; wiping his mouth on the back of his hand, he pattered out the door.

The porter had just resumed his mopping when the screen door creaked again; but this time he merely looked up, for the newcomer walked directly behind the bar, rolled his hat

JUST ONE MORNING

up in his coat, placed them in one of the many little cupboards under the back bar, opened a small drawer directly above it, with a corner gnawed out by the rats, untangled a comb from a string that attached a key to a billet of wood and arranged some very thin, black, vaseline-shining, strap-like locks over the top of his very small, peaked, bald head. Examining his fingers, which, in size and color, suggested Bologna sausages, he picked a lemon knife from under the bar and began manicuring his nails—the smallest as large as a teaspoon bowl. His own toilet complete he began that of the bar, which consisted of taking the glasses, one by one, from the back bar, polishing each with a towel and placing them temporarily on the front bar.

The screen door gave a prolonged creak, and a young man in well-made clothes and soiled linen stood just inside surveying the interior and its operations. He elevated his nose and instinctively turned his head towards the fresh air as the many odors met him. He braved them, though, walked over to the bar with a weak-kneed tread, leaned against the railing, unfolded a morning paper, glanced

JUST ONE MORNING

over the head lines, and attempted to fix his heavy, glassy eyes on the body type.

The bartender smiled—a half-pitying smile—and asked if he would have something. The young man moaned softly, looked down, and, with a trembling hand, scratched a bit of yellow of an egg that had lodged on one of his coat buttons. The bartender suggested a nice “Martini.” The young man gave another soft moan, took a sack of granulated tobacco from his side coat pocket, a cigarette paper from another side coat pocket, smoothed the wrinkles and blew on its edge, tremblingly opened the sack, poured the paper full of tobacco after forming it into a little trough, drew the puckering strings into his teeth with a very long parched tongue after much unsteady wagging of that member, closed the sack, tremblingly rolled the tobacco, sealed it by again extending his long parched tongue, placed the finished product between his teeth, lit it, blew a great cloud of smoke over the bar, brushed off the tobacco crumbs lodged in the wrinkles of his vest and then there were a few feeble pulsations of conversation: “Sin is luring,” said the young

JUST ONE MORNING

man. "By sin I mean a breach of the laws of nature—never gives what it promises—lures you and then lets you down with a bump."

"Oh, I think you'll feel better after a little whiskey and absinthe," interrupted the bartender.

The young man nodded and moaned again feebly, the decoction was set before him, he downed it and opened the inside page of the paper, reading more head lines, waiting for the stimulant to percolate his system. The body type became more and more distinct, he waded through several news items, and with some animation called to the bartender to "shoot up" another.

By this time the porter had reached the front door with his mopping and numberless dirty water rivulets raced over the stone sidewalk, running into each other and around one another all in seeming emulation to first reach the gutter, leaving their path strewn with cotton mop ravelings, swollen cigar butts, lemon rinds, corks, burnt matches and Bologna skins from the day before free lunch. The porter swept them up, wiped his hands

JUST ONE MORNING

on his trousers sides, took a general survey of the sky and streets, smiled at the Polish scrub-woman next door, who looked at him, grinned, remarked something in her own tongue to another scrub-woman next to that, which resulted in a peal of laughter from the latter, and the porter, having no defense, gathered his implements and went inside.

The screen door creaked again. An Italian entered carrying a basket covered with a wrinkled and cracked oilcloth. Leaving the day's supply of lemons and oranges, he departed.

Next came the milkman, dressed in a leather coat, carrying an unlighted cigar butt between his teeth and a dented can in his hand.

The mint gardener, the lunch meat man, the pretzel man, the bread man, the morning paper boy, all followed in quick succession.

There was a lull. The porter came in with a napkin covered tray containing the bartender's breakfast from a neighboring restaurant. The young man in the well-made clothes and soiled linen had just imbibed his fourth whiskey and absinthe and was begin-

JUST ONE MORNING

ning to "take notice." He observed the bartender despatching each item of the meal placed before him. The cereal and cream, the bacon, the eggs fried soft, and "lookin' up," the coffee, and even the burned and black potatoes fried heavy in grease. The young man at last folded his paper and started out with the remark that he guessed he would go over and at least see if he couldn't "worry down" an egg.

A gaunt figure of a man entered by the rear, in wet boots, and a buggy apron covered the front of his legs—a carriage washer in a neighboring livery stable. He carried a half-gallon fruit can with a jagged top hammered down to a smooth rim, which he deposited on the bar and held up a nickel with one of his pink, water-wrinkled hands. With his foaming can he departed with a passing word to the porter, who by that time was shaving up a block of ice in a wash tub at the back door.

A very fat clerk from the china store next door came in, laid down a dime, nodded to the bartender who broke an egg in a tall glass, picked a bit of shell out with a long-handled spoon, poured it full of beer and set

JUST ONE MORNING

it before the fat clerk, who swallowed it at a gulp and a final drain, and wiping his mouth on the back of his hand, he rushed out.

Some stoop-shouldered young men in faded clothes, broken shoes, and home-made shirts, came in one by one, selected morning papers from the front of the bar and took seats at the tables in the rear. The porter remarked something about "boarders" to the bartender and concluded it was about time to get lunch. The stoop-shouldered young men looked up from their papers and followed him with their eyes as he went behind the screen, and soon the odors of freshly cut Bologna and bread, onions and the steam from stewing meat filled the air.

A group of portly men sauntered in—contractors interspersed with a politician or two. The first at the bar snapped down a silver dollar and ordered whiskey. Some of the others consulted their watches, but all agreed it was about their time and nodded repetition. With that finished another round was ordered—then another. The conversation grew louder and louder. Others joined them. Suddenly the rattle of a dice box was heard.

JUST ONE MORNING

The morning sun shone through the front windows, over the screen and glistened among the newly polished glasses on the back bar.

Lunch was ready. More men came in. There was an almost continual ring of the cash register bell; the rapping on the bar of those impatient to be served; the hum of many voices; occasional hoarse laughs; the clinking of glasses; the rattle of plates and forks on the lunch counter; the room filled with fresh blue cigar smoke—and the saloon was awake.

THE AWAKENING OF MULO PLACE

THE AWAKENING OF MULO PLACE

MULO PLACE was a little street of little lots on which there were little houses occupied by little parents with little babies. Mulo Place was nestled away on the outskirts of the city, at the end of a track Y where the cars turned with many toned singing squeaks to go back to town, amid the weeded commons, a wooded pasture and off from and surrounded by longer and wider streets of wider lots on which there were wider houses occupied by older parents with older children.

All the houses along Mulo Place were new, the odors of newly turned earth, freshly laid sod, drying cement of the walks, hardening paint and creosote shingle stain all formed a procession of smells propelled by and mixed with breezes and odors from the neighboring weeded commons, the wooded pasture, which blew in, and around, and over all the little houses along the way.

THE AWAKENING OF MULO PLACE

To stand at the head of this little street and look down the row of houses on either side, in their newness and uniqueness, was to imagine them all soldiers of protest, standing with drawn arms, against the old and conventional in home building: There were the cement covered houses with green roofs, green blinds and green strips nailed to the plaster covered surfaces on which green vines twined; there were brown shingled houses where golden glow blossomed in the window and veranda boxes; there were silver gray stained houses with red roofs,—some had sodded terraces up to the floor line, some were oriental brick to the second story line, and then there were bricked floor and arbor roofed porches, all of which, in spite of the wide variety of expressions, indicated beyond question of a doubt that all the occupants of all the many little houses along Mulo Place were not only on the best of terms in house building ideas, but socially as well.

That soft, damp, clear-aired darkness peculiar to the last of morning's first quarter in late Spring hung over Mulo Place and cast all the houses into dark blue gray with

THE AWAKENING OF MULO PLACE

only the roofs and chimney tops defined against the long narrow streaks of first dawn in the eastern sky.

A cool breeze blew. Night birds hovered about and gave their squeaking cry. The soft pulsation of a locomotive on a distant railroad, increasing as it approached near distance; a blast of the whistle in three toned chimes; the rush of cars, and then all subsiding into quietness with the train in the far distance. Then complete silence; broken in a moment by a carol from a robin in the wooded pasture.

A far distant cock crowed, a middle distant cock answered, closely followed by one in the near distance.

All was quiet again.

The dawn breeze blew.

A far distant babe's cry came from No. 24 Mulo Place, a light quickly appeared in the window, and a night-gowned and pajamaed figure passed and repassed.

A middle distant babe's cry from No. 16 Mulo Place answered that of No. 24, closely followed by one in near distance from No. 9; lights also quickly appeared in the windows

THE AWAKENING OF MULO PLACE

with the passing and repassing of more night-gowned and pajamaed figures.

One by one the crying babes were silenced, lights disappeared and all was quiet again.

A rumbling wagon turned the corner into Mulo Place and stopped mid-way down the row. A rubber-booted and overalled man got out with a lantern; there was a clinking of glass in the back of the wagon and the driver began weaving around and back of all the houses leaving bottles of milk on each back porch.

The dawn streaks grew longer, wider, lighter and became fringed with gold.

The milk man drove out of one end of the street and the paper boy came in the other on a bicycle, folding and throwing the morning paper, hitting every front door on either side of the row as he went along.

The whole sky grew light.

The last owl car singingly squeaked on the track Y as it turned back to town.

A matted-haired Persian tabby cat shrinkingly skurried across the street and disappeared into the basement window of a brown shingle house, which had evidently been built

THE AWAKENING OF MULO PLACE

and the color scheme entuned to the cat, but this particular cat, like many a pet along Mulo Place, had fallen into neglect by the advent of a new baby.

The cool breezes of early morning died down.

The full glowing sun peered over the trees of the wooded pasture and the dew on the lawn grass sparkled in the full light of the new born day.

A front door opened and a young man in a bath robe and with uncombed hair peered out, saw no one about, stepped on the porch, picked up the morning paper, opened it to the sporting page and hurried back into the house again.

The hum of a lawn mower was heard far down the way.

Back doors opened one by one, house-gowned young women came out, took in the full milk bottles and set out empty ones.

Soon the popping of frying eggs was heard, and the odors of cooking ham and bacon joined those of newly turned earth, freshly laid sod, drying cement, hardening paint, creosote shingle stain, the weeded common, the

THE AWAKENING OF MULO PLACE

wooded pasture, and freshly cut grass, and all the multitude of mingled odors were carried in and around and over all the little houses of Mulo Place on the fresh air of morning.

The singing squeak on the track Y became more frequent; the distant roar of the city's traffic became more distinct and heavy.

The young men came out of their front doors one by one,—well groomed fellows who still patronized the college counter of the ready-to-wear clothing stores. Each stood for a moment on the sidewalk, looking up at their houses, waving adieu and throwing caresses at their wives, who stood with babes in arms at the windows; each took a farewell survey at his house and yard with the air of possession, and each turned reluctantly and hurried off to their day of work, and their little families and their little homes on Mulo Place remained in mind all day as the main-spring of their efforts.



Now, as it will have been observed, the principal industry of Mulo Place was the infant industry.

THE AWAKENING OF MULO PLACE

The stork had alighted, or was expected to light, on all the little houses along the way, but two.

The social-intellectual life of Mulo Place had started out with regular meetings for the reading and discussion of Frank Stoddard's travel lectures, but as advents were expected or came, the world of travel interest gradually congested and became bounded on the North by layettes and maternity gowns, on the East by the best doctor, on the South by infant foods, and on the West by teething and colic cures.

In fact, not to have experienced motherhood, or to expect to experience it within a very short period, was to soon be drowned out of the conversation on Mulo Place.

The young matron of No. 8 Mulo Place came out on her porch in a sweeping cap and broom in hand.

The matron of No. 7, across the way, came out on the walk with a perambulator and the two neighbors greeted each other with the merriest of good mornings.

THE AWAKENING OF MULO PLACE

The matrons in No. 6 and No. 9 hearing voices came out on their porches and more merry greetings followed.

A plainly dressed, middle aged woman turned into Mulo Place and came along the row.

The quartette of young matrons followed her with their eyes in silence until she disappeared on the porch of No. 13.

"Who's that, I wonder?" said No. 6 and No. 9 in duet.

"I don't know," said No. 8, "but she came along here at this same time yesterday morning."

"Yes," said No. 7, "and she wore the same hat that she had on this morning."

"I wonder if it could be their trained nurse," said No. 6.

"No," replied No. 9, "it surely isn't time for that."

Further consideration of the woman who wore the same hat two days in succession was prevented by the appearance of a huge, red seven-passenger automobile turning into the little street, a large fat man with down-

THE AWAKENING OF MULO PLACE

drooping jowls in the back seat who looked like the caricature of a trust magnate.

The equipage stopped in front of No. 21. "Why," exclaimed No. 9, "that surely isn't the doctor, and it isn't time for her to go to the hospital, is it?"

Any further questions as to the fat man and the purpose of the automobile in front of No. 21 was interrupted by a tall, willowy blonde young woman in a raincoat, highly made up, who ran down the steps of No. 10, clacked along the cement pavement with her high-heeled shoes as she rushed past, and the front porch quartette bit their lips and gave forth an audible hiss as they inhaled between their upper front teeth and lower lips.

Now, the tall blonde was one of the two drones in the human hive of replenishing the earth along Mulo Place; hers was one of the two houses along the row where the stork had not alighted, and where that particular bird was not expected to light, and the mere nod with which she was greeted by the quartette indicated the spirit of bees toward a drone, or the attitude of a union worker toward a non-union fellow worker in the same trade.

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No. 10 hurried up the steps of No. 3,—the house of the other non-union worker.

No. 6 broke silence by an undertone remark across the porch to No. 8,—something about being afraid of spoiling her figure.

“It isn’t going to rain, is it?” said the matron of No. 9, looking into the sky, “and did you notice that she had on a raincoat?”

“Yes,” said No. 6, “did she have on a maternity skirt under—”

The question was answered by the tall blonde rushing down the steps of No. 3, the raincoat on her arm,—it was just one non-union worker going over to have her dress hooked up by the other non-union worker.

The morning grew warm.

The ice man appeared around the corner, and the front porch quartette disappeared into their houses to rearrange the food in their refrigerators.

The vegetable man quickly followed the ice man; his array of garden truck displayed in an open wagon,—a veritable riot and congestion of color in variety, brilliancy, and in shades and tones and textures.

THE AWAKENING OF MULO PLACE

The fruit man came bearing the perfume of the tropics in the path of his wagon to blend with the new house odors and those of the weeded commons and wooded pasture.

The sun shone down in the full light of morning and a warm, moist, yielding vapor arose from the earth.

All the doors and windows of all the little houses along Mulo Place were open.

The clear high notes of a canary filled the air.

A hen in a neighboring back yard sang the song that told her little world that it would be one egg richer very soon. Another hen clucked and some baby chicks peeped.

And the sun poured down in the full born day of Spring,—down onto the earth of all the little lots of Mulo Place, and the moist, yielding air, teeming with life and growth, fanned in the windows of all the little houses, seemingly saying to all the little occupants:

“Go outside and partake more of me, you in the Spring of life, for what I blow into your windows is but a sample; I am free,—I am yours and you are mine. Come, breathe of me, and let us be one!”

THE AWAKENING OF MULO PLACE

And all the mothers to be came out onto the porches and into the yards and breathed of the Life of Now and dreamed of the Life To Be.

And the mothers that were came also and strolled in the open, along the sidewalks, wheeling their babes, now pushing their little conveyances from behind, now walking before them, now bending over and peering down into the faces of their reproductions and smiling,—a smile that only woman who has listened for and heard the command of nature is glorified to smile.

Mulo Place was awake.

THE COUNTRY BARBER SHOP

THE COUNTRY BARBER SHOP

IN the search for matter to supply the insistent presses and the expectant reader, "we" go into "our" intellectual hayloft, look in odd corners, stir around unused bins and finally pound on the hay in the hopes that an idea will fly out.

Of course, "we" and "our" is in an editorial sense; for wasn't it the great and good Bill Nye who said that there were just two people in this world entitled to refer to themselves as "we"—one was the editor and the other a fellow with a tapeworm?

"Our" idea barn isn't bursting with plenty, but in the mow of musty and cobwebbed memories, one of the more picturesque of bucolic characters and institutions is recalled—the barber and his shop.

He was about one generation removed from members of his trade who pulled teeth and kept leeches—pulled teeth with a wrench somewhat resembling a huge door key.

THE COUNTRY BARBER SHOP

In the parlance of the business it was a "three-chair shop"—on one side of the public square. The sidewalk grade had been raised several times since the erection of the old building and you had to walk down several steps to get into it.

The operating chairs were of black walnut, with arms coming down at the sides, carved in the form of snakes, meeting the seat, coiling up again and the open-mouthed heads projecting beyond. The seats and backs were upholstered in rough carpet of flower-garden design. The wire spiral spring ends cut through in places and care had to be taken in sitting down that you were not stabbed in the bosom of the rear elevation.

On the wall in front of these chairs a wavy mirror reflected a patron's countenance to mumps-like proportions. Further down this wall a box, divided into pigeonholes containing a dozen or more mugs with the names of prominent citizens in gilt Old English letters, together with pictured objects, emblematic of their business or profession. For instance: Peleg Hostetter, the liveryman, a horse collar and a couple of whips; Zachariah Dye, the

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druggist, a mortar and pestle; Conrad Gizler, the butcher, a steer's head with a meat saw, cleaver and knife arranged around it; Jake Kern, the shoemaker, a boot, and Steve Hankins, the undertaker, a scythe and sheaf of wheat.

On a partition separating the front and back of the shop, a framed sign read: "If you can't raise ten cents, raise whiskers." There was an immense pile of hair behind this partition—almost enough to make a mattress.

In the middle of the shop stood a marble-top table on which were several tattered and torn numbers of the Police News and Police Gazette, a "Hood's Rimester," "Funny Stories by Funny Drummers, or How to Entertain Your Customers," and a bottle of ink and some blue ruled writing paper.

The barber, a tall thin man, had a mass of kinky, oily hair in which he carried his combs when at work; large romantic brown eyes, skin shriveled and dark, suggesting a raisin, and his mustache had a melancholy droop. He wore a brown velvet coat and vest trimmed at the edges and pockets with

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wide silk braid; lavender pants, red socks and patent leather dancing pumps tied with wide ribbons.

As "Hood's Rimester" indicated, he frequently dallied with the muses. On a well known railroad wreck near the town he once "laid" a "pome" of which the following is an extract:

"And in among the wreck I see
A man pinioned down by the knee,
And hear him calmly for to say:
'Cut, oh, cut, my leg away!'"

Then, on the long summer afternoons he sat back in one of the "operating" chairs, thrummed a guitar and sang love songs through his nose.

Although a three-chair shop, the proprietor was the only regular barber. During the rush, Saturday nights, he called in a scroll sawyer from the planing mill. This fellow's middle finger of the left hand was bent down stiff to a right angle at the second joint. The end had been mashed and a long nail grew out of the end, which made it a great inducement to be shaved by him; for in mussing up your

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hair previous to combing, it usually got tangled in this nail and several hanks were pulled out by the roots.

Like the proprietor, this scroll-sawyer barber was musically inclined. He played the piano around at dances and "doubled" with a yellow clarinet—until he got two more fingers sawed off, then he retired to "slip horn" in the band.

A peculiar circumstance in the loss of these fingers: One day while working at his saw-table he made a slip and cut off one of them. Of course he laid up for a week and returned one Monday morning. All his shopmates were glad to see him and gathered around while he explained how it happened. He started the saw, picked up a piece of board and placed it on the saw-table by way of illustration—well, he cut off another finger!

They had a peculiar system of apprenticeship in these country shops. For instance: During the rush time, when all three chairs were full, the lathering, washing and wiping of faces was done by the cub. By the time a "patient's" beard was soaped, and rubbed for softening, the regular barber would be

THE COUNTRY BARBER SHOP

through scraping a previous patient and the cub would wash and wipe the latter's face. In this way they kept moving from chair to chair.

They didn't have much water in these country shops—the only supply being from a copper tank on the back of the stove—warm in winter and cold in summer. The barber would take a rag, walk over to the tank, turn on the faucet, squeeze it out on the way back to the chair and drops of water would race over the dusty floor like mercury or shot. No one ever used water on his hair—they vaselined it—roached it up in front like the curl of a shaving from a jack-plane.

The barber's wife was the first woman in the town to bleach her hair. She dressed in "changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples and the crisping pins," as described in that monumental editorial on vanity, the third chapter of Isaiah. All in a combination of colors that fairly screamed. Neither choice of manner nor expression, she used to come in the shop, sit down, place her feet upon a gas-pipe railing along the front window and eye-ball passersby.

THE COUNTRY BARBER SHOP

One Saturday afternoon the shop was full, the barber's wife in her favorite position, when a woman, the banker's wife, came along the sidewalk. She followed—eyed her as far as possible and finally said, under her breath: "O hell, that woman makes me tired."

Her husband, working at the first chair near her, laid down his brush, comb and scissors and began letting go prolonged shouts of laughter, bending over at each shout and slapping his legs. Finally he subsided, started to work again and after catching his breath, shook his head in defiance and said with a snicker: "That's Ell, she always says jist what she thinks."

MEMORIES OF AN OLD MAN

MEMORIES OF AN OLD MAN

HE was old—very old. He should have been at home, in dressing gown and slippers, smoking a long pipe, and telling stories of things of long ago to a complete circle of grandchildren about an arm-chair.

Instead, though, he trudged along the district where the flowing tide of business meets the ebbing tide of grassy lawn in the city's best residence district of by-gone days.

He wore a shiny brown Prince Albert coat, very thin shoes, and a rumpled plush cap, under which long tufts of white hair protruded. His pinched and drawn face as white almost as his long unkempt beard.

He stood still for a moment and rested on a heavy blackthorn cane. Suddenly he raised his haunted hollow eyes and made a quick survey of the houses along the way.

A big automobile went by. The old man gave it a following glance, dropped his eyes,

fell to meditating, and muttered something about how fast the world went by these days.

Pulling off a home-knit mitten, he exposed a hand with large protruding blue veins over the back like rivulets on a map. Then he took from his pocket a coarse cotton handkerchief, wadded it to the size of a walnut and wiped the water from his eyes.

Evening was on. With another quick glance at all sides, the old man tottered up to one of the gates along the way, grasped the iron pickets with his face close up and peered through at a large square brick house set far back in the yard.

The windows were all dark; one of the blinds, with broken slats, hung limp on one hinge. Water dripped from the cornice, and many a year had passed since it had seen a painter's brush.

There was a fountain in the foreground, its basin filled with earth, and green moss covered its stone coping; brown patches here and there over the lawn marked the spot where flowers had once grown; a cast iron dog near the gravel walk had a piece of its tail broken off and one ear was entirely gone.

MEMORIES OF AN OLD MAN

The old man noticed an iron seat under a tree in the middle of the yard, pushed the gate open, when it gave a loud creak, as if it sang the funeral chant of grandeurs past.

Though cold, raw and damp, he walked over to this seat, and with many groans, grunts, and cracking of joints he sat down.

He looked into the heavens. Great white clouds drifted past like a procession of phantoms. The autumn winds blew, and the fir trees in the yard swung and swayed like great funeral plumes for the death of summer past.

The old man sat looking up into the tree branches above him. Suddenly his cheek was fanned by a warm breeze.

He looked around him.

The fountain was playing, flowers bloomed in every bed, the bit of tail and the ear had grown on the iron dog, the lawn was trimmed, and appeared like green velvet. All was summer.

The house, newly painted, had a June rose in full bloom climbing around the entrance. A light appeared at one of the windows—then another, then still another, till they shone

from cellar to attic, casting their rays on the green lawn.

He looked again. There were figures of men and women passing inside. Groups of twos and threes came up the gravel walk. A violin was being tuned inside the house. He arose and followed the people along the walk. At the entrance he remembered his old clothes, but looked down only to discover that they were all new—all new—a long claw-hammer coat, ruffled shirt-front, stock collar and elaborately figured silk low-cut vest.

He thought of his old worn shoes. But he looked down again only to discover that they were also new—not shoes at all, but patent-leather dancing pumps, tied with wide black ribbons.

A servant ushered him inside. He followed the other guests up the broad stairway. Another servant showed him to the dressing-room, and took his tall stovepipe hat and light cape overcoat.

He looked in the dressing mirror. His hair was no longer white but brown. He had no beard, but was clean shaven, and there were no wrinkles in his face. He was young.

MEMORIES OF AN OLD MAN

He stood there and surveyed himself, first one side then the other in the mirror. He spent much time in arranging the minutest corner of his stock, brushing his clothes, and put in a half hour or more arranging his curling locks, that fairly reeked in scented bear's oil. He was the last man in the room, the others having gone below. He washed the bear's oil from his hands and descended the stairs.

The rooms were covered with canvas, and brilliantly lighted by lamps and candles, and filled with guests. There were odors of burning oil, newly ironed linen, freshly cut old garden flowers and lavender.

He stood there on the elevation of the last step of the stairs. Partners were being taken for the first dance. The music started, and men, dressed like himself, and young women gowned in old organdie, circled in and out and about the rooms.

His eyes followed a certain girl, dressed in blue; she was tall and willowy, had white skin, red hair, combed down at the sides and over her ears like the scroll on the cap of an Ionic column.

Their eyes met. She left the man with whom she was waltzing—yes, left him in the middle of the dance, and came tripping to him. She came nearer and nearer, grasped his hand, and then still nearer—so near that a few stray hairs on her temples touched his cheek. So near that when she looked into his eyes he saw his own face reflected in her pupils.

She grasped his dance program hanging to a coat button by a cord and wrote her own name after every dance—yes, every dance.

He stepped down to the floor from the stairs on which he was standing, out the front door, and the young woman on his arm. Yes, it was too warm for dancing—yes, too warm, and they strolled through the grounds.

At last they sat down on the iron seat. They were very close to each other; they looked into the trees, the moonlight sifted through the foliage upon their upturned faces.

He was about to lay his head against her, but thought of his bear's oiled hair. He arranged a white silk handkerchief on her shoulder. She made no protest, but only

looked into his eyes. He leaned over to rest his head there—

He fell over on the bench. He awoke with a start, and looked around him. The place beside him on the bench was vacant.

He stood up and looked around again. It was winter.

The house was dark, dingy, and water dripped from the cornice; the fountain was still, earth filled the basin, and green moss covered the coping; long frost-killed grass covered the yard, brown patches marked the beds where flowers had grown, the ear and tail were off the cast iron dog, and all was desolation and dilapidation. The old man limbered his legs, stiff from cold, walked out of the tall iron gate which gave a particularly loud, deathknell-like creak after him and disappeared into the darkness of the night.

“WHAT TIME SHE BURNT”

“WHAT TIME SHE BURNT”

A Tale of Dingman's Ferry

ONCE upon a day the good people of Dingman's Ferry, Pike County, Indiana, had a sum of money in their common treasury over that necessary for the running of village government.

There was a division in the town board as to the advisability of buying a town clock or a new fire-bell.

They had a bell on the schoolhouse that could be used in case of fire—it was cracked and all that, but still it could be heard over the little community.

All the members were finally won over to the original town-clock faction, except one old man—the richest in the village—a chronic objector who acted as a watch-dog of the exchequer.

His argument was that if a fire should occur at school time, the bucket brigade would not know whether they were being called to arms or the children to school.

“WHAT TIME SHE BURNT”

In spite of this he was voted down and reluctantly retired to silence.

The town clock was purchased, finally arrived, and installed in the tower of the “Hotel de ‘Vile.’ ”

At the first board meeting thereafter, a prepared resolution was presented and adopted, voting fifteen cents per week to old Socrates Skillen to wind the clock, and to fill, trim, light and otherwise care for one lamp to be placed behind the semi-transparent dial so the citizens could see the time at night.

Old Socrates Skillen, by the way, drove a baggage wagon all through Grant’s Vicksburg campaign, and remembered very distinctly of seeing Charles Dickens change cars at Sandusky, Ohio, in 1842.

One night a few weeks after the dedication of the common timepiece some one went through the town yelling, “Fire!”

Every one piled out of bed, opened the shutters and looked out. There was a faint glow in the sky which grew brighter and brighter every moment.

“WHAT TIME SHE BURNT”

Some one caught the ear of the crier long enough to ask why he did not ring the school-bell. But lo! it was the schoolhouse.

All poured out of their houses and ran down to the corner of Main and Front streets. Men shouted, dogs barked, and cattle, horses and chickens went bellowing, neighing and cackling over the fields in a stampede.

Crowds gathered and stood in little groups and watched the smoke pour out from under the shingles, lighted by peeping tongues of flame which met neighboring tongues of flame, finally joining together in one grand volcanic roar to light the sky and be reflected to the hills, woods and fields in the valley beyond.

There was no apparatus in the hamlet; the building was doomed, so the bucket brigade confined themselves to the roof of Count & Poudry's meat market and Butterfield & Skudder's general store across the way.

A long lash of fire swept away from the main mass, entwined the belfry, and in a few moments there was a loud crack, the apex lagged down on one side, and the bell fell into the ruins with a farewell clank—and was

“WHAT TIME SHE BURNT”

silent forever to the good people of Dingman's Ferry, Pike County, Indiana.

The roar of flame gradually ceased, the fire died down, and gave place to white smoke in the blackness of night. A few charred studing, a mass of glowing embers, the tall chimney and the brick foundation marked the spot where the village seat of learning had stood.

“The devouring element had done its work of devastation, and the conflagration was complete,” as the county paper said the next week.

Many of the villagers had gone home. All was quiet save a few voices of those who remained to tell what they were doing when they heard the alarm.

The members of the town board were lined up under the wooden awning in front of a store across the way. The chronic objector came along—the richest man of the town who had stood out in favor of the fire-bell. He eyed all the members collectively, then individually. He looked at the smoldering ruins, then up at the town clock, stroked his beard, cast an eye skyward, opened one corner of his mouth, and said: “Well; you'll have one satisfaction. You'll know what time she burnt.”

THE MAN AND THE MOUSE

THE MAN AND THE MOUSE

A Christmas Story

A CITY boarding-house may be merry on Christmas day—merry as compared to common days; but by contrast with other institutions and places it is dreary indeed. The depression is relative, just as the purity of the snow renders conspicuous by difference the sombreness of the old buildings, the dilapidated fences and neglected yards—the general indifference of the inhabitants to their surroundings; for—

When boarders enter the front door the love and sentiment of home jumps out over the back fence.

These dwellers are happy in their small way, just as they live in their small way; for they have their ten-centers in lieu of everyday pipes and stogies, and half-pint hip-pocket flasks of superficial cheer—both the compliments of Steve Bruner's saloon around the corner.

THE MAN AND THE MOUSE

There are none of the footsteps and high-keyed voices of romping children; no odors of savory dressing, burning brandy on the plum pudding, no rich aroma of freshly made coffee; there are no cheery voices of men and women over the exchange of presents and in anticipation of the feast to come—even the japanned tin signs of the cancer doctor, the chiropodist and the clairvoyant hanging on the rotten porch columns along the way, seem to swing, sway, creak and groan in minor-keyed defiance of the day's spirit that everybody feels everywhere else.

In one of these ex-homes, in the city's ex-aristocratic residence section, the third floor ball-room had been arranged for revenue only by wallpaper-covered flooring board partitions into a series of human box stalls.

The ceilings of these were interrupted here and there by roof hip lines; the floors were covered with dust-laden ingrain carpet, and light came from small oval windows set just above the baseboards; all were furnished with very narrow iron beds and the coverings appeared to have been dyed in sooty water at their last alleged washing; then there was a

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straight-backed chair, and a blistered varnished washstand with a small foot rug before it—with several cakes of soap tramped into the warp.

The third floor smells of this human livery stable seemed on the friendliest terms with all the other smells of all the other floors; for they mixed in a most affectionate way. The back end of a drug store smell, no doubt from the weekly shots of the bugging gun; the dry wood and dust smell of a garret, with about two parts cheap tobacco to one of coal oil and bad plumbing were seasoned to taste with the oldest cooking odors to be found alive and tottering about the place.

In one of these stalls sat a very young man—a bunch of collars in his hand. Those worn one day he placed on one knee, those worn two days on the other knee,—one, absolutely clean, he threw into a very old suit case on the floor.

“I’ll wear that on the job hunt tomorrow,” he muttered aloud, “but, O hell! what’s the use?”

He had slept off his breakfast—as they say in hard-up circles. The cleanest of the day-

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worn collars had been found and put on, and with hollow eyes he sat gazing out the window—vacantly watching the snowflakes as they fell on the deserted street. They were not eyes hollowed by dissipation or disease, but—

Hunger!

There came a step on the stair, then a sharp hard-heeled pounding walk along the hall.

The man took a pair of scissors from his suit case and began trimming the frayed edges of his cuffs.

Then a hard, bony knock on the thin flooring board door. Without waiting for an answer a long nose appeared inside a pair of hollow cheeks, hair done up in curl papers in front and coiled to the dimensions of a cloak button in the back.

“Yer room rent wuz due last night,” said the shrew in a voice as hard and sharp as her walk, knock and features.

“I am aware of it,” said the man without looking up from his cuff trimming, “but this is Christmas and—”

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"Yes this is Christmas and all that," interrupted the shrew, "but that ain't payin' my rent on this house an'—"

"I was going to say when you interrupted me," put in the man, "that I have been hunting a job for a week. I can't very well continue on Christmas, and then again all the pawn-shops are closed."

The last part of the man's sentence was uttered with a grasp toward the pocket containing a leather case of drawing instruments and a glance at his overcoat on the bed where it had served as bed-clothes reinforcement.

The shrew's head disappeared from the crack of the door and the sound of hard, sharp footsteps and hard, sharp-voiced muttering diminished down the stairs—the only audible words being: "Only two dollars," "pay," "dead beats," "how can I expect," "my rent," etc.

The man brushed the cuff trimmings from his lap and looked down on the deserted street again—with eyes hollowed by hunger.

Without turning from the window he reached into his vest pocket and rubbed a nickel with a dime together for a moment;

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then took the leather case of drawing instruments from his inside pocket, opened it and displayed the shining steel and german silver. "These'll be the last to go," he said aloud with another glance toward the overcoat on the bed. "But what's the use?"

His eye fell on a razor in the suit case. He picked it up, opened it and looked hard at the blade. "That would make a nasty mess," he sighed. "Carbolic acid? That's a low-browed trick. There's a decent way of doing everything—but still all the streams are frozen."

The man fell to looking down on the street again, watching the slowly falling snow, each flake distinct against a background of somber hues and tones of neighboring buildings, fences and deserted street.

The man arose, put on his overcoat, felt in his pocket for the nickel and dime, rubbed them together and went down stairs.

If there is one place less merry than another on Christmas day—next to a boarding-house—it is a cheap restaurant. One of the all-night kind—the key of the front door lost

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years ago, and where the proprietor never comes save to count and take away the money. One that looks cheap enough to suit the most exacting country excursionist.

At one of these the man entered, first stopping to feel in his vest pocket for the nickel and dime and rub them together for a moment.

The place was deserted by patrons—one waiter stood in the window looking out on the street at the slowly falling snow; another stood at the kitchen door, head down and idly scratching figures on the white sand of the floor with his feet.

The air of the room was heavy laden with steam and the rank weedy smell of over-boiled coffee grounds; and no sound but the song in a foreign tongue of a dishwasher in the rear.

The only thing that could possibly have been construed as Christmas decoration by wildest stretch of imagination were some coarse rusty stocks of celery that hung limp over the edges of tumblers filled with milky water and set in the center of each table

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covered with egg, coffee and catsup-stained cloths.

The man took a seat on a high stool at the counter—the last in the row towards the rear.

The nearest waiter stood before him, arms apart, hands resting on the counter top and idly flipping crumbs off on the floor with his fore-fingers as he waited for the order.

The man looked about confusedly, felt in his vest pocket for the nickel and dime, rubbed them together for a moment and ordered beans and clear coffee.

“Bullets and draw a black!” yelled the waiter to some one in the kitchen.

With the order before the only person in the room, the waiter resumed his idle figure-scraping in the floor sand.

All was still.

The man bent over, looked down and inhaled the steam from the beans and coffee, felt in his vest pocket for the nickel and dime and in his inside pocket for his instrument case. Then he surveyed the room—the walls and ceiling grimed with steam and grease, the coarse rusty stocks of celery that hung limp in

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the glasses of milky water; through the front window at the clouded light of the deserted street and finally gazed vacantly at the slowly falling snowflakes—all with the hollow eyes of hunger.

“What’s the use? What’s the use? What’s the—”

The third time repetition was interrupted—the man’s attention became attracted by a dirty piece of bun on the floor near the side wall.

There was of course nothing in the bun itself, but—

It moved—slowly, steadily toward the wall.

The man leaned forward, looking intently with hollow eyes of hunger.

There was a mouse behind the bun!

He had settled himself for his first fork load of beans and a sip of coffee when a cat came out of the kitchen door, spied the mouse, crouched and sprang. The mouse disappeared. The cat, logged with food, merely smelled the hole and passed on.

The mouse came out of the hole, looked, listened, ran to the bun, which began to move—slowly, steadily to the wall.

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The man took several fork loads of beans, felt in his vest pocket for the nickel and dime, rubbed them together and then reached for his instrument case.

He looked again. One obstacle had been overcome—the bun was up to the wall, but—

The bun was too large for the hole.

Another fork load of beans, another sip of coffee. The bun began to turn and twist and tumble before the hole.

The man was about to feel in his pocket for the nickel and dime and in his inside coat pocket for the instrument case, but he only made a pass in that direction; for his interest and attention were on the bun, which slowly, surely became smaller and smaller.

To his food again. Several fork loads of beans and sips of coffee. Then he dug hard with his fork at a piece of pickled pork, cutting it into portions which he ate with the few remaining beans, and finally finished with the last swallow of coffee.

The man looked up. The little drama of the mouse and bun had closed—the bun was in the hole.

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He picked up his check, walked up front, carelessly threw it on the cash desk with the dime and walked out with his overcoat on his arm.

He stood in front of the place for a moment and took a long breath. The sun had come out, the streets were filling with afternoon strollers. The hungry look had disappeared from the man's eyes, he protruded his chin and ground his teeth.

"That was only a little mouse," he said to himself, "but I am a man."

He slapped his pocket containing his instruments and looked down at his overcoat on his arm—the bun was nearing the hole.

"A sale will bring more than a soak," he said again to himself. "Guess there's a Ghetto somewhere in this town where Christmas doesn't prevent their transacting business—and I can buy another—well, when I get the bun in the hole.

"Tomorrow the human cats will be logged with food and let a man alone while he gets—a bun in a hole."

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That night the man returned to his rooming house minus his overcoat, and plus seven dollars which jingled so loudly in his pocket that it attracted the attention of the shrew who met him on the stairs.

And the next day—well, he was a man.

LIGE TINCHARD—PREACHER



LIGE TINCHARD—PREACHER

EVERY road up through the southern states of America, and across "Smith & Wesson's line," seems to lead directly to Indianapolis so far as the colored brothers are concerned. Yes, and after they arrive, all streets lead to Indiana avenue, the Great Black Way of Bucktown.

Bucktown is in the same relation to the community as San Juan Hill in New York.

An Indiana avenue rooming-house landlady said that all she had to do to get roomers was to keep plenty of coal in the stoves, and they'd be as thick on the floor at fifteen cents a flop as flies on a week-old piece of sticky paper.

It was in one of the neighborhoods of that city where the residents are just prosperous enough to dislike doing their own work—where they keep maid servants, but can't afford men of all work—where the masters of the houses are continually looking out of the window for some chance stroller up from the

Great Black Way to call in and at least take the rough off.

It was early morning. The first snow of the year had fallen during the night, leaving everything pure and white. The smoothness and whiteness was not disturbed even to the extent of cat tracks around a house and up to a back kitchen door.

Lige Tinchard had arrived in town only the night before. From where? Well, he didn't know himself. He was looking the town over—the business prospects. He came through an alley of the neighborhood just described.

His trousers flapped about his legs as he shuffled along; and his garments hung with a freedom that suggested no underclothes. The lack of food was indicated by wrinkles in his stomach that showed clear through his vest.

Lige Tinchard was black. So black that his single figure in the alley, contrasted with the snow of the landscape, made him appear by contrast like a pan of milk.

As he passed, one fat old colored cook looked out of a back window and said that

Lige didn't have enough clothes on to make an iron-holder.

A very dark-colored mammy looked out of another back window and said that he was black as seven nights—that she used to think she was black, but he beat her a couple of nights.

Just as Lige Tinchard came along, a stable door opened at his side.

Lige stopped and inhaled the animal heat, mixed with the odors of manure ammonia, leather, hay and axle grease that rushed out into the cold alley.

With the opening of that stable door Lige's opportunity opened.

"Want a job curryin' and hitchin' up my horse?" said a white man inside.

Lige went in and to work. He not only curried "Old Ned," but rubbed him down so that when he drove him around in front his coat shone in the morning sunlight like a new plug hat.

Lige got a quarter and breakfast in the kitchen.

Then the madam of the house wanted the rugs and floors cleaned—well, that night Lige slept in the stable.

It wasn't a week until Lige had the key of every outside basement door in the neighborhood where he entered night and morning to attend fires. He wore good cast-off clothes that he traded for work, and all the wrinkles were out of his stomach.

He did barn, household and basement chores for a large clientele at 25 cents per hour. Lige had as many quarters as there were working hours in the day—and then some; for a woman fitted him out with an old dress suit to wait table at an evening dinner party. This added another to his source of revenue—he furnished waiters for balls, parties and receptions, not only himself but as many others as needed.

Lige was so busy that he didn't have time to go over on the Great Black Way and spend his quarters. He still lived in the barn where first he lit, with its original comforts increased by the addition of a little monkey stove.

All this was more than six years ago.

One night Lige was paying off some of his waiter helpers from a large roll of bills.

"Say, Lige," said one of the young negroes, "what you all savin' you money fo? You ain't got nobody to leave it to? You workin' all the time an' don't git no chance to spend what you git."

"Nevah you mind, boy," returned Lige, "I—I—I'm preachin'."

"Preachin'!" exclaimed the other "Preachin'! Whare's you preachin'?"

"You know them two properties I got over heah on Indgiany avenue?" said Lige. "Well, there's whare I's preachin'."

"Them's no church, what's you all talkin' about, man?"

"You don't need no church to preach," replied Lige. "I'm preachin' there whare I got them properties, I'm preachin' whare I work every day and with this roll o' money in my pocket."

Lige waited for all the wonderment to percolate the other negro's understanding, but the other gave it up as being past him and started to walk off.

"Come back heah, boy," yelled Lige. "I'll tell you what I mean.

"I ain't got nobody to leave what I got to. I ain't goin' to leave it to nobody. After I'm gone it'll be there an' preachin' to all you young ornery niggahs. Yas, sah, an' while I'm gettin' mo' I'm preachin' to you all. I'm tellin' you what one niggah can do by workin' all the time an' not spendin' his money on crap shootin', turpentine gin and picnics and dancin' an' all the likes—workin' all the time 'stead o' spendin' all the time.

"When I struck this heah man's town I didn't have nothin'—just as old Aunt Millie said when she first seed me comin' up the alley one cold mawnin'—I didn't have clothes enough to make an iron-holder.

"Yes, sah, an'—an'—I—I—I'm goin' to keep right on preachin'—the kind that ain't sayin' a word."

And Lige Tinchard is still preaching.

THE EGOTISM OF MEMORY

THE EGOTISM OF MEMORY

EVENING is on. The town-clock clanks out six. The anvil in the blacksmith-shop around the corner ceases its ring. The merchants are locking their stores and are going home. They turn and look at you as they pass. The swallows chirp on their homeward fly over the public square, and the robins in the trees of the court house yard carol out their lay of joy.

If you are an old man—say a bachelor of sixty and five, you begin to wander up the byways and obscure places of the old town—once familiar, but now made strange by time.

You pass the rear of an old livery-stable. An old hearse is piled back in one corner. You recognize it as the first in the county. You stand there and think of the sorrows this old vehicle has seen—of the burdens it has borne. A breeze blows through the cracks in the old stable walls, and one of the glassless doors of the old hearse swings and creaks

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on its hinges, as if it sang the funeral chant of its former days of usefulness.

There it stands, glass broken out, paint worn off, and only one big black moth-eaten plume as a memorial of its past grandeur.

There it stands, back in a corner amid a pile of broken shafts, tongues, scraps of old iron and rubbish—forgotten as the flowers on the silent ones it has borne from earthly homes forever.

You wander on up a side street, stop before a certain house and stand silently contemplating it—your mind is on a certain blue-eyed and rosy-checked girl—Helen.

It's dark now.

You look into the heavens. The moon goes into shadow. Great white clouds whirl past like a procession of phantoms, the wind blows through the trees along the sidewalk, and they swing and sway like great black funeral plumes for the death of seasons past.

You think of your long lonely life, the success you have attained, and compare it all to that of your less material friends who are happily married, and with children and grandchildren to honor them in the nodding-time of

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life—it all reverts to a picture of blue eyes and rosy cheeks—Helen.

You dream a waking dream of youth. A peaceful summer Sunday evening, the church bell ringing, people sitting out on their front steps and in doorways follow you with their eyes as you pass.

The lamp in the little parlor burns low—she is at the gate to meet you, blue eyes and rosy cheeks—Helen.

You waken, and in the weak egotism of memory walk up on the porch and knock at the door.

A boy answers.

“Do you know a lady living about here by the name of—I don’t know her last name now, but her first is Helen.”

“Yes, that’s my mother’s name—want to see her?”

You walk in, sit down and look around the room in an effort to recognize some of the old furniture.

A woman, worn with work and shriveled with age, sits by the window.

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You look at her in an effort to see the mother you knew—of blue eyes and rosy cheeks—Helen.

The mother of the boy enters the room.

You arise, extend a hand, give your name and say: "I used to come to see you a good many years ago."

She doesn't know you.

Slowly your hand goes to your chin, you look from the mother of the boy to the grandmother seated by the window, and sighingly say:

"Yes, I guess it *was* the old lady."

THE BROKEN SPELL

THE BROKEN SPELL

JUDGE DAVID S. GOODING was for many years the leading criminal lawyer of central Indiana. Like most men of his professional time, he figured in politics—he used the same powers that swayed juries for the benefit of the candidates of his political party. Typical of a type—none of your ninety-pound modern lawyer,—with an intellect that clicked like a rat trap, boiled eyes covered with a pair of glasses as big as stove lids, and a voice that suggested a graveyard on a wet night. He was big and brawny and brainy—possibly more brawn than brain. His voice—well, Eph Marsh used to say that he could send more shingles off an old court house roof than a hard rain. Look over the grass in the Hancock County, Indiana, courthouse yard and find it covered with pieces of rotten shingles, with the ground perfectly dry, and you would know that old Dave Goodin' had been makin' a speech.

THE BROKEN SPELL

On the main street of Greenfield, Indiana, and on the second floor of a dingy old brick building was the office of The Honorable David S. Gooding. An iron stairway in the alley at the side led directly into it. Every item of furnishing had served from another age and would appear like curious bric-a-brac in a modern law office. The cherry desk with a door hinged at the bottom and lowering to form a writing slant; the inkstand with a cork attached by a string; the quill pens, the blotting sand box, the sealing wax and seals; the green-top table in the middle of the room strewn with dog-eared law books and papers; the wire card case hanging to a nail filled with business cards; the energetic ticking wall-clock with a long, sweeping pendulum outside; the cracked, glazed yellow maps of the Eastern and Western Hemispheres on opposite sides of the wall; the dusty hair-cloth sofa, the brass-knobbed iron safe that locked with a huge key—and all were frowned down upon from the top of the book case by a bronze plaster bust of Sir William Blackstone.

THE BROKEN SPELL

The old judge, himself, would have served as bric-a-brac. He had lived into another age and brought all the articles and manners in dress of the past with him. Stovepipe hat, stock collar, swallow tail coat, pleated shirt front, silk vest, doe-skin pants and white gaiters. On the street he carried a huge cotton umbrella which in size suggested a circus tent; rattan ribs with small ivory balls at the ends and the "center pole" worn off at the ferrule end—he clutched it nervously as he trudged along as if afraid some one would snatch it away from him.

The old judge had stumped the "Grand Old Hoosier State," as he called it, in every campaign as far back as Zach Taylor, and was proud of it. Every school house, court house and public hall from Ohio to Lake county, and crosswise again from Steuben to Posey county had rung with his voice.

He had conducted the Independence Day celebration back through several generations of children by assembling them in the Hard Shell Baptist Church. After prayer and introductory remarks he would have the bell rung violently and as the sound died away he

THE BROKEN SPELL

would arise and read the Declaration of Independence in a voice that thundered far beyond the compass of the walls.

Once the Judge returned to his native state, Kentucky, as the principal speaker at a Democratic barbecue in a "Clearing" of the woods near his native town.

Now, the judge pursued the old style of stump oratory. He hooted and derided the opposing party and their candidates. To him every Republican was not a horse-thief, but every horse-thief was a Republican.

People were assembled for miles around. The judge mounted the platform that had been draped in flags and bunting. A mighty cheer greeted him. He advanced to a deal table in front, poured a broken handled beer mug full of water from an iron-stone china pitcher, drank it with two gulps and sat the mug down with a bang. Then he twisted one leg slightly around the other, rested his weight on one foot, steadied himself by placing two fingers at the second joints on the table. In this attitude he surveyed the assemblage with a watery grey eye.

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The lemonade and peanut vendors ceased their cry. There were no sounds save the rattle, made by the wind, of dry leaves hanging to a nearby beech tree, and the hum of conversation on the skirts of the crowd. There are always those in the frayed edges of an assemblage of this kind, who cannot hear the speaker, who always cheer the loudest at a climax in a speech and frequently retire behind trees to partake of the contents of hip-pocket flasks.

As before mentioned, the judge surveyed the assemblage with a watery grey eye, and as one sometimes goes over the strings of a musical instrument previous to playing to see that they are all in tune, the judge went over all the notes of his voice clearing his throat, coughing and gasping all at the same time. He then began his address somewhat as follows:

“Fellow Citizens and Friends of the Democratic Party:—It is with a good deal of pleasure that I address you in this particular locality this afternoon; for it was here that I was born and reared. In yonder log house was where I first saw the light of day and

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where my parents passed all their early struggles when this country was yet a wilderness. And over there, on that vine-clad hill, behind that clump of trees there are two mounds and my poor old mother and father lie there at rest, free from all earthly cares forever."

And the fellows on the outskirts of the crowd who could not hear, raised their hands above their heads and shouted: "*That's right, Davy, give 'em hell.*"

THE MAN FROM KEERSBURG

THE MAN FROM KEERSBURG

HE sat near a group of us in the lobby of the Grand Hotel at Indianapolis. He was a ruralist. The rain-settled dust in the crease of his hat and in the wrinkles of his clothes and shoes would have indicated that to the observer, but all doubts were removed when he put up one leg on his knee, pulled off a loose fitting gaiter shoe with the life all out of the elastic at the side, poured about 90 grains of wheat into a convenient cuspidor, dusted off the bottom of his sock and repeated the operation on the other foot.

He was the type that with the passing years produces rural philosophers; for he was shrewd, yet kindly, observing among his own people and in sympathy with them, yet knows their weaknesses.

We had exhausted all topics of conversation, had smoked ourselves into a state of wakefulness and were receptive to entertainment.

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The rural one observed this, pulled a smooth, yellow, machine-made cigar out of his pocket, bit the end off with a loud bass sounding pop of his teeth and abruptly began his narrative:

"Every country town is noted for something.

"M'Cordsville is noted for liars. It got the reputation years ago by all the loafers at Snozier's grocery tryin' to equal a whopper got off by old Gettysburg Stebbins. He told that he dug out of Libby prison durin' the army by makin' a tunnel two miles long with nothin' but a tin cup to dig with; that he come out in a farmer's barn lot, was hungry, took his sword, cut a ham off a live hog, and come back there two years afterward to find that the ham had pretty near growed on the hog again.

"My town, Keersburg, Indiana, is noted for funerals.

"Ambrose Hedges, our undertaker, has got finer warerooms than any here in the city, Scepter Hill cemetery is better located and purtier than any in the state, and with more fine monuments; and there hasn't been a

THE MAN FROM KEERSBURG

funeral in the whole county in the memory of the oldest inhabitant with less than eleven carriages.

“Of course all this costs some money and it frequently makes public charges of the widders and orphans, but the public don’t mind, fer we got the reputation fer funerals to maintain. Our school houses is in bad shape all over the county and we need more of ’em; the jail on the court house grounds ain’t nothin’ better than a bear pit to put human bein’s in, and then again, the Reliance Fire Company’s shed is about to fall in, but it will take all the tax money to put a new iron fence around the cemetery,—they’ll leave the reputation for good schools and a jail and fire house to some other town, but none of ’em’ll ever get ahead of Keersburg on funerals.

“Why, I do believe I learned my figures when I was a kid standin’ on the corner of Main and Front streets countin’ funeral carriages.

“Congressman Stiggins had thirty-two carriages at his funeral, the highest known record. He was a politician and a director

in the C., W. & M. railroad and a lot of railroad men came down from Chicago. They delayed the funeral two days to allow the Orchard Hotel to have cots shipped up from Indianapolis.

“Old Hedges, the undertaker, buys a new hearse every year,—he never lets nothin’ get run down, and he’s got five practically new hacks. He trades in the old hearse and the firm that makes the new one always shows it at the state fair. He’s got the biggest piece of plate glass on the public square in his show winder, and I reckon one of the biggest in the state. He always leaves the gas a burnin’ low at night and has the coffins in his winder turn up a little on edge so you can see the linin’.

“He must make money, for he gets all the good trade in that part of the state, and he certainly does know how to run a funeral. The only complaint anybody has about him is that he goes out at a funeral while the minister is speakin’ and cusses his drivers fer talkin’ too loud and the hosses fer gnawin’ the bark off the shade trees in front of the house.

“Everybody goes to the cemetery in Keersburg on Sunday just the same as you people

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here in the city goes to the parks. They sit around on the grass or walk around and criticize the monuments and flower beds that different ones has got over their graves.

“Old Ves Skillen has just completed a family vault that is attractin’ a good deal of attention just now. It seems that years ago he used to be in the private bankin’ business and about the time they got to organizin’ state and national banks old Ves got disgusted and quit, —he said that he didn’t want no inspectors from the state or government comin’ in and stickin’ their nose into the private affairs of him and his customers to find out how much money they had on hand, fer they might have to pay taxes on it.

“Well, old Ves he sold all his bank fixtures and desks and one thing and another when he went out of the private bankin’ business, but he had an iron safe as big as a smoke house that he couldn’t seem to get shet of. Well, a few months ago he had it hauled out to Scepter Hill cemetery, stood it upon the fambly lot and built a stone wall around it in the form of a vault with the big doors of the safe for the door of the vault.

THE MAN FROM KEERSBURG

"He got it all done in time fer last Sunday's crowd and some devilish feller said that he hoped that old Ves had given the Angel Gabriel the combination.

"They select the preachers at Keersburg accordin' to their ability to conduct funeral services. They never go around hearin' a prospect in a regular church sermon, but they wait 'till they know he is goin' to preach a funeral sermon somewhere and they send one of the committee around to hear him.

"They like these kind that talk through their nose when they get very sanctimonious.

"They got a new preacher there now, and the other day he preached a funeral sermon on the text, 'And there shall be no death to die, nor life to live.'

"He's got all the old ladies in the county lookin' in their Bibles and huntin' from cover to cover to find that text, and they can't do it. It seems that nobody has the nerve to ask him where it's from, but I guess it's one of them texts that sounds better than it looks.

"Oh, yes, I forgot to tell you that old Ambrose Hedges always sets off the public fireworks Fourth of July on the court house

THE MAN FROM KEERSBURG

square. The merchants take up a collection for it and it's always a big event. Old Hedges is always a kind of a master of ceremonies in everything, and he certainly does know how to set off fireworks,—he's good at all kinds of sky work.

"Last year we planned a bigger time than usual and they appointed me, Judge Joel Williams and Taylor Ragan, the grocery keeper there in town, to mix the punch for the Fourth of July speakers.

"I own the grain elevator down by the depot and the three of us went around and bought up all the fancy liquor in the gin mills over town that had been settin' in fly-specked bottles in their show windows and that they couldn't sell. Most anything will do for punch. They just gave it to us when they found out what we wanted with it, but guess they wouldn't have been so generous if they knew what we did with it.

"Now Judge Williams is one of them refined sort of men with a house full of books and a wife that ain't afraid to speak her mind. He's got more books than a Carnegie library and they say he married off his daughters to

make room for the books. He's even got 'em on the edge of the steps of the front stairs and only allowin' enough room between to go up and down. I do believe he's got every book that's ever printed and a lot of them are alike, for I know he's got five sets of the Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire and three sets of Dickens' works.

"Well, as I was goin' on to tell we took all these wet groceries into my office out of the way of the crowd and where we could mix the punch and nobody would bother us. Taylor Ragan, he didn't show up,—he was too busy cuttin' cheese and dealin' out crackers to the farmers that come in to attend the exercises. Along about ten o'clock in the morning it set into a drizzlin' rain, we got lonesome way off there by ourselves and began to mix punch and taste it and pretty soon we got to tastin' it about as fast as we made it. It began to rain harder and we knew there would be no speakin' that afternoon and it would be a shame to let all the good punch go to waste.

"About two o'clock in the afternoon old Hedges stuck his head in the door to see how the punch was gettin' along and we fixed up

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another batch for him. We had a couple of fancy bottles of some white lookin' stuff that the judge said was wood alcohol. Course it wasn't though,—it was just one of his jokes, for really it was some kind of cordial water. We poured these two bottles in the punch for old Hedge's benefit and whatever it was it made it strong enough to bear up eggs,—it was worse than hard cider that had been layin' in a whiskey barrel.

"Hedges laid around there all afternoon and about four o'clock he was pretty tight. By that time the rain had stopped and he concluded he'd better go up town and see about unpackin' the fireworks. They had a flat-form built on the public square where there wasn't no trees. Old Hedges got out his boxes and was unpackin' 'em and arranging the sky rockets and pin wheels in a big pile. He was pretty unsteady or he wouldn't have done it. Somehow, anyway, he must have dropped a cigar in the pile, or it might have been some devilish boy throwed a match in,—we never did get it quite figgered out, but anyhow the whole batch went off at once in broad daylight,—about \$250 worth. It

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blowed up the flatform they built and the rockets and pin wheels went zizzling and sputterin' through the grass in the court house yard and set fire to the band stand that the band boys had built the year before at considerable expense, and it burned clean to the ground. It scared all the teams hitched to the rack around the square, a lot of 'em run off and what we missed in aerial display that night we made up in rain, punch and excitement that afternoon.

"I didn't get home that night till pretty near eight o'clock. I got home and found my wife and kids all cryin' and sick with disappointment,—it seems I'd promised them that mornin' I would come home early, hitch up the rig and take them all down to see the fireworks. They hadn't heard about the fireworks goin' off in broad daylight and blowin' up the flatform and burnin' up the band stand. I got that explained all straight and gave a pretty fair account of it. I'd a been all right if I hadn't gone too far and got a little too much confidence. I finished tellin' them all about it and was sittin' there quiet in the rockin' chair when all at once I broke out and

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sez to my wife,—‘Mary, I believe I forgot to shet the shafe!’ My wife looked at me kind of strange and then I knew I’d said ‘shafe’ instead of safe. The next time I got ‘safe’ all right, but I said ‘shoot’ instead of ‘shut.’ Try as I would, whenever I said ‘shut’ all right I would say ‘shafe,’ and when I said ‘safe’ all right I got all fuddled and said ‘shoot.’

“My wife come up to me close, took a big long sniff,—and I guess I did smell like a mixture of a distillery and an upper bureau drawer with all that fancy liquor in me, for some of it did taste like perfumery. Then she started in to give me fits about comin’ home in that condition, a leavin’ all my valuables with the safe open and all them tramps around the depot. I don’t remember what she said or when she quit, for I went to sleep right there in the chair.

“The next mornin’ I went down to the office early to clean up the wreck and hid away all the bottles, and I no more and finished when my father-in-law came along all excitement. He’s an old retired hard shell Baptist preacher, and he went on to tell that he had just come by Judge Joel Williams’

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house, that he had stood outside and heard the judge's wife just a givin' him Hail Columbia, that he got from the talk that the judge had come home drunk, the night before, tried to get up stairs quietly, had got to the top and fell down and knocked all the books off the steps and his wife had to pull him out from under a big pile of 'em.

"The old man said that he hoped I would never come home in that condition, and I told him that I wouldn't,—again, but I said the word 'again' under my breath so he wouldn't hear it."

At the close of his story, the man from Keersburg got up, stretched, brushed the cigar ashes from the wrinkles of his vest, bade us all good night, went over to the desk, got his key and disappeared in the door of the elevator.

THE SPORTY BACHELOR



THE SPORTY BACHELOR

ONE of the best country town characters is the sporty bachelor. There used to be one at—well, it doesn't make any difference about the town, for there is one in every town of five to ten thousand inhabitants. He is a type—usually a man of 45 to 50 years old, hair of such a shade that you can't tell whether it is very blond or very grey, and which he always keeps closely cropped; he is clean shaven with a sort of made-to-order complexion as if he used a lot of woman's dope on his face. His clothes are always light in color and almost college boy-like in their extreme cut; a low cut vest, a stiff front shirt with fine red stripes—sometimes the stripes are blue, but always running across rather than vertical. About the only antique item of his dress are his shoes of the box-toe type and of alligator leather. While these last named members are rather dainty in cut, as is the effect of the entire man, yet they are of the same material as those worn by

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switch crew railroad brakemen a couple of decades ago.

The sporty bachelor lives at the hotel—the Pearson House; he is the last one down to breakfast, the first to dinner at noon and supper at night, and as he enters the dining-room, say in the morning, smelling very loud of toilet water and tooth paste, he will smile at the head waitress and pass a little semi-confidential joke to her. He always sits in one place—usually about the middle of the room, and very frequently his individual waitress places a single flower in a water glass before his plate.

Yes, and by the way, he always hangs his hat on the same hook of the rack as he passes into his meals. Finding anyone else's hat on his hook two days in succession he would go to the office and complain.

His father was the leading lawyer in the community a generation ago and served a couple of terms in Congress, on which grounds the sporty bachelor holds himself as a member of the county aristocracy, which is externally expressed in rather an erect walk, partly due, no doubt, to the fact that he at-

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tended a military school in his early youth at Poughkeepsie, N. Y.

He is never in any business, and is rather secretive about his financial affairs which are usually in the hands of some hard-headed lawyer or banker in the town who has invested his inheritance in farm mortgages and some gilt-edged bank stock, charging a commission of five per cent for placing the principal and collecting the income and attending to other annoying details. This nets the sporty bachelor about a hundred and fifty a month, and by means of a little penury, externally expressed by carrying his change in a purse, he manages to live at the hotel, keep a rather slim, high-bred horse and a stingy seated buggy at the livery stable around the corner, and in which he can be seen driving out on the well-paved roads most any pleasant afternoon.

Yes, and out of his income he is even able to afford about two suits of clothes a year which he orders from a blonde, gum chewing city tailor who comes around every six months for orders and a week later for a try-on. As this tailor buys a drink every time a

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customer gives him an order or pays a bill, he always gets soused towards night and has to be either put to bed in the hotel or sent down to the eight-four evening train for home in the one rattle-box hack that the town affords.

But to return to the sporty bachelor: There is such a wealth of characters rich in picturesque about a country town, and all of them are more or less standardized, and it is almost impossible to describe one without the imagination running away to co-related characters and the pen of a writer following the runaway, so the reader will pardon digressions.

The sporty bachelor is just on the edge of respectability in his community. However, he wouldn't be any further away from respectability if he could, nor would he be any nearer to it—he deliberately plans his relation to society—he is what he wants to be.

The sporty side of his reputation he gains by playing poker every night in a room over Hodges' grocery with a well-known lawyer of the county, a stock farmer, possibly the hotel-keeper, sometimes a merchant of the town, not

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infrequently a traveling man and always the clerk in the jewelry store. This jewelry clerk, by the way, makes about fifteen a week as an engraver and watch repairer and fifteen more a week playing poker with the gang, which income enables him to put on a front sufficient to be engaged to the most beautiful girl in the town, who has about a hundred thousand in her own right. In the evenings the only time this jewelry clerk is away from the poker room is long enough to take his girl to a dance in the hotel parlor or at one of the better houses over town about twice a week. He is rather secretive about his relation to the poker room, usually passing in and out of it through the alley, by reason of the parents of the young woman to whom he is engaged. This young woman herself knows all about the poker room—she is just young enough and giddy enough to be proud of the attentions of a semi-rake.

The sporty bachelor is rather open about all his doings, goings and comings. This is his way of allowing it to become known that he is a sport, yet he keeps the talk moderated in order that the respectable side of his life

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will not be submerged. He drinks about three cocktails a day, but rather as a confection than a stimulant; he smokes three ten-cent cigars a day of a brand a little better value than is exhibited in the cigar stand of the hotel—they are kept down under the show case, and if any of the guests stand in with the clerk he will sell him one.



Then the sporty bachelor has a little way of advertising his gaming propensities by sitting around the hotel office in the morning after breakfast reading his paper, and if a companion at the poker table the night before chances in, he will look up, wink in a sly way and talk in a mysterious air in an undertone that everybody about can hear, giving the impression to all those not directly addressed that it is not intended that they should understand—referring to a hand that he held the night before, or the amount in a certain jackpot and the way the cards ran all evening.

The young, would-be sports sitting around the hotel office will eagerly lick up these little secretive bits and look on the source of them with eyes of envy.

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The sporty bachelor always has his imitators in a country town. There is always one or two fellows who dress as near like him as their means will admit, drink one of his cocktails or buy one of his brand of cigars once in a while on Saturday nights, and even have a poker room with a lower ante and limit game than the one patronized by their model.

Every country town sport has his imitators, and possibly by this means the type is perpetuated.

Now, the sporty bachelor manages to keep about even with the game—he plays poker as he lives—that is, in a conservative way. He may be five dollars ahead one week and the same amount behind the next. If he loses this amount he will lay off and attend a lecture or concert at the church which is his means of keeping up the respectable side of his character. He will even go to church on Easter or when some big city preacher fills a local pulpit.

Understand, he is never invited to a social function at the home of any one—he isn't respectable enough for that and he doesn't want to be. The nearest approach to society he

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gets, or wants to be, is somewhere with an admission fee.

After a lecture or concert at the church he will take some of the women that he has known in his youth, and who, like himself, have remained single, around to the ice cream parlor, but only after much urging on his part, and his women guests will look around them all the while they are in his company as if they knew that they were not doing just the right thing and as if they were afraid of being seen with him. After these refreshment occasions he will walk home with one or more of his spinster friends and leave them at the gate, for no one ever thinks of inviting him in.

In the main this is the type and daily life of the average sporty bachelor, except that he may go out on one of the residence streets and eat Sunday dinner with a sister, sit around all afternoon playing with some nieces and nephews and come back to the hotel in the evening with a new photograph of one of these children for the dresser in his room.

Sometimes you will find a sporty bachelor who carries a little paper sack of gumdrops

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in his coat-tail pocket and feeds them out to children along the way, but usually they do not indulge in this practice until they have reached a state of senility that comes with about sixty years.

He is in every town on a smaller or larger scale according to the size of the town. He bears about the same actual economic relation to things human as a comic picture that we find on the wall of a semi-public place does to things physical. We stop and look at it and it affords us harmless amusement for the moment. The sporty bachelor is about as harmless, save that he gives a rather indifferent example in selfishness to the young of his immediate neighborhood.

THE FLAT NEXT DOOR

THE FLAT NEXT DOOR

THE Puterton was one of those consolidations of dwellings—a flat building—and it loomed up huge, boxlike, against the morning mist, noonday sun, or evening dusk of the city, according to the time of day you viewed it. With the Puterton spick and span, new and smelling of wet plaster, burning lacquer of the steam pipes, and fresh paint and varnish, everybody moved in. No sooner were they settled till the women discovered, in their back porch meetings, that everybody was about the same age and position in life, and, obviously, they were very congenial. All dressed in their best, made afternoon parlor calls on their neighbors, and the word was soon passed around that in the whole Puterton there was not one misfit—or “wrong font,” as printers say.

Mrs. Fubton, a petite blonde with a hopping walk, had an idea. She confided it to her near neighbor, who, in turn, confided it to the neighbor on the other side, and so on down

the line. Somebody carried the idea to the flat above; it spread tier after tier till everybody in the entire Puterton had an idea, and that was—to form a card club.

Mrs. Jobson lived next to the Fubtons, and they were fast friends. Mrs. Jobson was a stately brunette, had a distinct way of sounding her “rs” and “ings,” and it was soon whispered about that she had been an actress, for “actresses” will happen in the best of flats. One Wednesday afternoon all the women of the Puterton were assembled in the flats of Mrs. Fubton and Mrs. Jobson—there were too many for one flat—and the Puterton Card Club was formed. It was agreed that the membership should be confined to the Puterton; each tenant should entertain the club in turn Wednesday afternoons, providing refreshments and prizes, so that the burden would fall equitably upon all, the prizes going to the best players, which was expected. There was not a card turned that afternoon, but after the business closed Mrs. Jobson, the suspected actress, rendered “How Salvator Won,” with something “lighter” of Will Carleton’s as an encore.

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Each meeting of the club, as the season progressed, became more elaborate in point of refreshments and prizes—each successive entertainer outdoing her predecessor. The membership was so large that it was necessary to throw two flats together, and when it became Mrs. Fubton's and Mrs. Jobson's turn, the former suggested that she entertain the club in her parents' home, a large and well appointed house.

Now, the father of Mrs. Fubton had houses and lands and crisp papers with green printing on them. He had built this home when the city was much younger and on a street that bade fair to become one of the best, but as years rolled on the good old man found himself surrounded by small stores, factories, and dwellings of honest working people. He was a conservative; his children married, and as it was impossible to obtain the amount of his investment he remained there and made the best of it. Mrs. Jobson hinted a few objections to the arrangement, but Mrs. Fubton was insistent, and the following Wednesday the regular meeting of the Puterton Card Club was held there. The rooms were dec-

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orated with "smilax and ferns," the prizes were exquisite, the refreshments elaborate, there was a full attendance, and everybody had "simply a lovely time."

The following day Mrs. Jobson felt that, as she was a partner in the arrangement, she should make excuses for holding the meeting of the Puterton Card Club in such a low part of the city. Of course, this was handed from flat to flat, and a little interest added each time. When it arrived at the flat of Fubton the application "low" was taken as personal to the family of Mrs. Fubton.

At the next meeting of the club the two women didn't speak. There came a lull in the card playing; Mrs. Jobson made some remark about the kind and quality of steak they used. Little Mrs. Fubton suggested something about round steak being the Jobson's limit. There came another lull in the playing; the talk turned to chorus girls, somebody said that they thought the characters of chorus girls were much better than formerly, and Mrs. Fubton snappingly asked Mrs. Jobson if they were not so much better now than when she was in the chorus?

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Mrs. Jobson rose to her full height. There was no more card playing that afternoon. Mrs. Jobson went to the back porch. Mrs. Fubton followed her, and all the other members gathered at the back bedroom and kitchen windows to hear the row. Mrs. Fubton said that she had always heard Mrs. Jobson was a low person, and that before she was married she herself had not even done housework, much less work in a chorus. Mrs. Jobson retorted by saying she had heard quite the same thing of Mrs. Fubton and all her people, and as to working in the chorus—she surveyed little Mrs. Fubton from head to foot and said she couldn't get in the chorus if she wanted to. In the two voiced medley of high-keyed talk that followed Mrs. Jobson was heard to say that her husband had said that the Fubtons were low people. "Mr. Jobson had said that the Fubtons were low people!" That settled it so far as the women were concerned, and Mrs. Fubton coolly dismissed the matter for the time and went home.

Mr. Jobson was a big prosperous young broker, who dressed well, and had heavy sacks

under his eyes, and smoked fat black cigars. The next day he received a call in his office from Mr. Fubton, a little blond man who talked through his nose. Mr. Fubton demanded an apology for what he had said about his wife. Mr. Jobson had said nothing about his wife, and was not going to make an apology, and believed that men should keep out and let women settle their own rows. All this being in a mild tone of voice. Mr. Fubton became very mad, said that his wife had said that he had said that his wife's people were low, and finally left the office with the statement that he would place the matter in the hands of an attorney.

That night there was a row in the Jobson flat. Jobson took his wife to task for saying he had said that the Fubtons were "low people" when he had been in town but a short time and didn't know them in their family history. Their bedroom was lighted far into the night; the loud bass voice of the husband was heard by the neighbors with sobs and rich contralto-voiced statements uttered in a way that only a large woman can who at one time had ambitions to play Camille.

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At the next meeting Mrs. Fubton had a sick headache and couldn't go; the resignation of Mrs. Jobson was received, stating that she expected to move.

Mrs. Fubton was not satisfied with the amount of sympathy she received, and decided to move also, and rented a suite in the Prunette, another new building right around the corner. The Fubtons were only the second tenants in the new building, and were just nicely settled when one morning Mrs. Fubton went out to place a card in the glass front of the letter box to her flat. She glanced to the next box, when suddenly everything before her grew dark and she staggered back into her own apartment. That night when Mr. Fubton returned home he found his petite wife lying face downward on the bed, the pillow soaked with tears.

"Why, what is the matter, dearest," he asked.

"Oh," she said in convulsive sobs, "the Jobsons-are-living-next-door."



THE MELODRAMA OF YESTERDAY

THE MELODRAMA OF YESTERDAY

MELODRAMA has passed away. Its place has been taken by the movies, and the people who formerly thronged the ten, twenty, thirty houses, to witness lurid plays like "Bertha, the Sewing Machine Girl," and "When London Sleeps," are today crowding into the gaudy stucco palaces given over to the latest moving picture reels.

But in its day, and that day was not so far distant, melodrama played its great part in educating a theater-going public, for part of the audience that went to melodrama a few years ago do not patronize picture shows exclusively. They received there a taste for better things in the theater, and you will see them today thronging to some of the better class houses.

Did you ever attend a ten, twenty and thirty cent theater when they played melodrama; where the appeal was to dull sensibilities; where villainy, treachery, sentiment and

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humor were thrown at them in such large and well-defined chunks that they couldn't possibly miss them?

A low-brow, heavy with fish-globelike glasses of between-act beer, might nod off in slumber, but only for a few minutes, for he would be awakened by the neighs of the girl with the bed-mattress hair as she protests to her father, the muttonchop-whiskered banker, against her impending marriage to Harold Rutledge as being the only means of saving the banking house of Jones & Co. from closing its doors forever. If that doesn't arouse him there are the snake-like hisses of the villain as he drags a very puny child up the road to the mountain; or the bull-bellows of the black, curly-haired hero making love to the bony blonde; or the blustering of the "heavy," the politician, with a fifteen-drinks-a-day nose. Then if these don't awaken him there is the noise attending an act-end climax—the pistol shots, shouts of the stage mob, the orchestra playing at circus-band pressure, the fall of the curtain on the stage when the cheers and screams of the audience blend off into lone cries from a brazen little boy yelling, "Pea-

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nuts, popcorn and chewing gum here!" The has-been sleeper, thoroughly aroused, looks around, licks his chops, gets up and follows his fellow low-brows up the aisle and to the wet grocery next door for more fish-globes of beer.

It's there, you can't help getting it. There is a thrill in every scene—something to catch 'em and hold 'em in every situation from the moment the curtain goes up on Nora, the housemaid, dusting the furniture of Banker Jones' parlor. Nora appeals to the kitchen mechanics by a slam at her mistress and a remark as to how hard she has to work. This policy of catch 'em-hold 'em is maintained clear through, down to the last scene of the last act, where they all line up to receive the paternal blessing.

The melodrama is mental dope.

The melodrama bears the same relation to real life as the perfume bottle to real flowers.

The melodrama pictures to the lower strata of intelligence a life ideal in their understanding—it causes them to forget for the moment their smoky homes in the begrimed factory district; that there are children to

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herd, and cans to rush, neighbors to fight with, coal and old iron to steal, and the various little inharmonious pursuits that keep the police mill wheels of justice a-grinding.

All melodramas were written by rule and note—just as a good cook makes a cake by recipe. There were several different kinds of melodrama, as there are different kinds of cake; but each was prepared according to a well-defined formula.

Here is a good general prescription warranted to "make 'em holler," as they say in the parlance of the business: One peck of villainy, two pecks of love, one gallon of pathos, one quart of dear old mother sentiment. Stir well, allow to stand and settle until you can look at it without nausea, then add a dash of old flag patriotism, a dust of girl ruining, two tablespoonfuls of child abduction, season to taste with comedy, and serve with garnishments of red fire, gunpowder smoke, house-by-the-hill, wildwood and richman's parlor scenery.

There is one situation and one line that was in every well regulated melodrama—it was just as necessary as butter to cake. Here

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it is: A little two-foot-and-a-half girl, who shows the effects of being up nights through the paint, will grab a three-foot hoss pistol, point it at the villain and say in a very weak, skim-milk voice: "Touch one hair of my mother's head and I will blow your brains out!"

This always "made 'em holler."

At the conclusion of this line every low-brow in the house would bring his paws down on his knees, bob up in his seat like a jumping-jack, yell "Good!" and finally subside with a hiss that sounds like the escape from a cotton compress.

At the general establishment of melodrama theaters, of the ten, twenty, thirty class, some twenty-five years ago, it was soon discovered that a new field of theatrical patronage had been created; they made theatrical patronage just as the cheap magazines made their own readers. More money was made from this class of amusement than from any other on the very simple commercial principle that there are more people with a dime than a dollar—small but aggregate profits.

THE MELODRAMA OF YESTERDAY

At their inception many persons attended a theater for the first time, and some of the happenings by the seriousness with which they took the performances were interesting. For instance, when they put on ten, twenty, thirty melodrama at the Park Theater in Indianapolis, for the first few weeks they had to deliver the villain to and from the hotel in a prison van to keep the yaps from mobbing him.

It is pretty good commerce to appeal to dull sensibilities either in theaters, newspapers, books, or any of the physical necessities of life; for the field and audience are large.

It even has its application to the palate; for confectioners say that the candies with the strongest flavoring are the ones commanding the largest sale. Two men perceived this and made a fortune on it in chewing gum by reason of its heavy flavoring—one used peppermint, and the other wintergreen and pepsin.

THE REFORMATION OF SALUTIE

THE REFORMATION OF SALUTIE

HE was a big oozing hulk of a fellow so steeped in cookin' whiskey that he exuded an odor like a gas leak,—but that was more than two years ago.

He lived, or rather stayed, at a cheap sailor boarding-house down around the docks, and cleaned up saloons for his drinks and food. The saloon jobs didn't last long enough; for he usually drank up more than he cleaned up, and sometimes, when in an unusually high state of sosh, he cleaned them *out*,—but that was more than two years ago.

Salutie was his name—at least the only one known in bumdom. Derived, no doubt, from his deferential way of saluting officers as he willingly submitted to arrest. And there wasn't a better-known name in police circles; for he held the workhouse sentence record,—but that was more than two years ago.

In major matters Salutie respected the law; for once a police court judge, *pro tem.*, asked if he had ever been arrested before. Every-

body laughed, but Salutie spoke up hotly: "Only drunk and vag. and A. and B., your honor" (vagrancy, and assault and battery). There was an appealing hound-pup-like expression in his eye and a mellow modulation in his voice, and the fact became accepted that it was booze within the man rather than the man.

Salutie had been a tool-maker and on many a pay-roll for years at four per day. Suddenly he began tanking up and laying off for days at a time,—just when a set of dies were in a critical stage and no one else could conveniently finish them. He was let out, and got other jobs here and there, but his record soon went before him and was finally passed up all down the line,—but that was more than two years ago.



A big hulk of a fellow stood before a down-town store window on Saturday night. The biggest, fattest baby imaginable sat on one arm,—held there by one of its legs. The youngster scrambled about the big man's shoulders protruding its rubicund cheeks and staring with hound-pup-like eyes at the pass-

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ing throng in the last hours of week-end shopping. The man pointed to a little sailor suit with brass buttons on a form in the window and talked to a wholesome-looking woman by his side.

"That's 'bout a three-year-old size," said the man.

"That's 'bout a six-year-old size," said the woman positively.

"No," returned the man, "I don't think we'll have to wait six years to buy that suit; for you know when folks take a kid in a clothin' store to get fitted out, and they say he's five years old, why the clerk'll say that he's big fer his age and 'll take an eight-year-size. That puffs up the folks and they buy more; good deal like a baby-kissin' candidate."

Two policemen stood on the corner.

One nudged the other and exclaimed: "There's Salutie!"

Salutie had a feeling of being observed, turned, handed the baby to the woman at his side, walked over to the officers and greeted them,—not with the old deferential bow of more than two years ago, but by extending a

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hand to each; at the same time casting glances backward at the woman and baby with an expression of pride one sees in those who have acquired something worth while since last they met friends of days gone by.

Salutie introduced the woman—his wife—who gave a merry little laugh by way of acknowledgment. She held out the baby, who discharged a loud parrot-like screech and made a dive for an officer's star.

"Ain't that a big baby!" exclaimed one of the officers.

"Looks like you, Salutie," said the other.

Then both balanced Salutie's baby in palms and guessed its weight. Then they looked at Salutie's wholesome wife, who gave another merry little laugh.

"How'd you fool her?" asked both officers in duet.

"Didn't fool her," replied Salutie. "She fooled me first,—by marryin' the other feller—that's what put me to the bad. I tried to forget her by tankin' up on varnish-remover whiskey. I did, pretty near—and everything else I guess. It was like this: I was sittin' on one of them benches in the park. My in'ards

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was about burnt out,—they felt like an old rusty stovepipe that had been layin' in a leaky shed. It was there by the fountain, where the water squirts up, and I sat there watchin' it; fer it seemed to sort o' cool off my pipes. Well, as I said, I was sittin' there when all at once she come along the walk.

“I was sober in a minute.

“She didn't look good and I knew somethin' was the matter. I went up to her—I felt privileged to; fer she didn't look much better than me so far as clothes was concerned.

“‘Go way,’ she sez, ‘I never want to speak to another man.’

“Then I did know somethin' was the matter. I follered her and found she was washin' dishes in an eatin'-house. That night I follered her agin to where she was livin' and I found out that the other feller wasn't livin' with her,—it seems she had drawed one of them prize-packages of husbands that thinks he's got to beat up a woman about once't a week or she won't love him. She was pretty husky and he had to get soshed up to do it. Well, in the process, he got to likin' to get

soshed up better than he did her, and she left him.

“Next day I went out and got a job in front of a punch-press,—yes, and the dies in that press was ones I made myself more’n two years ago. I didn’t drink any more, except to taper off on and before the month was out I had enough to get me a fair outfit of clothes, and then I went around there again where she lived. It didn’t go very well at first, but after the fourth or fifth time I got her so she’d listen to reason.

“After I got some of the tremble out of me I went up in the tool-shop and got a job at my trade. By the middle of winter I had saved enough to hire a lawyer to do the unharnessin’ of the other feller, and Christmas two year ago me and her hitched up at a J. P.’s.

“Last year the kid here didn’t have no Christmas, unless you call his own life a present—the fact is he brought us a Christmas present in hisself.

“I’m payin’ fer property now out here. We got flower-beds in the front yard and chickens in the back yard—got a big two-

THE REFORMATION OF SALUTIE

story-and-a-basement rooster fer Sunday,—better come out and help lick him up.

“I haven’t been down town before at night in—let me see—oh, that was more’n two years ago. We just come tonight to see if there wasn’t some little thing we could get him,—we just sit there at home at nights by the center table with the bedroom door open so we can hear him breathe. When he frets or cries, me and her go in and sit by the bed awhile till he sleeps agin—seems to me I can get just as drunk there listenin’ to him breathe and sittin’ there watchin’ the little feller grow, as ever I did over the rail of a bum saloon usin’ my coat sleeves fer a bar rag and histin’ ’em in.”

Salutie turned to go. The baby made another lunge for one of the policeman’s brass buttons and let out another loud screech because he didn’t get it.

“Well, good night, men,” said Salutie.

And he bowed as he disappeared in the passing throng—the old deferential bow; for it was, no doubt, his final exit from the lives of guardians of the law after his life of—well, that was more than two years ago.



AT KIMES' CORNERS

AT KIMES' CORNERS (A One-Act Sketch.)

Characters: Joel Jessups, a blacksmith; Nat
Straighter, a village do-nothing

Scene:—Crossroads blacksmith's in the center of a scattered village,—a rough barn-like building covered with a generation or two of tattered circus-posters and surrounded by a long line of vehicles in various stages of superannuation and dilapidation, amid piles of wagon-beds, buggy-tops, shafts, tongues, scraps of old iron and rubbish. The forge is cold, and although the sun is shining brightly, the double-doors wide open, the ages of smoke have so blackened the interior that it appears as a dark chasm. Joel Jessups, a wiry little old man in worn jeans pants tucked into his boot-tops, a tattered and burned leather apron and red flannel undershirt, sits outside on the edge of the shrinking-box, looking up and down the road and smoking a pipe covered with a brass cap in the form of a king's crown.

JOEL JESSUPS—I was here way back in the days when this wasn't nothin' but an anvil and forge in the woods. In the good old days when I ironed wagons, made axes, wedges, log-chains, plow-shares,

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dog-irons, and bear traps. When me and my 'prentice boy made hoss-shoes and nails at night after the day's jobbin' was done, out of bar-iron at nine cents a pound, and the wolves and owls, attracted by the light from the forge, come out and howled and hooted at us. When we went into the woods and burned our own charcoal, before there was a pound of stone-coal, as they called it in them days, west of Pittsburgh.

(Sighing and shaking his head.) It's been many a day since I ironed a wagon, made a hoss-shoe, nail, ax, wedge, log-chain, dog-iron or bear-trap. *(Hears footsteps around on the side road, turns, looks diagonally across the shop, through a window latticed with rusty strap-iron and sees the head and shoulders of Nat Straighter.)*

Enter Nat Straighter.

Nat Straighter — Good mornin', Joel, what's you doin'?

Joel Jessups—Oh, I ain't doin' nothin'—I kind o' got the slows this mornin'—to tell you the truth, I ain't got nothin' to do. All the wagons is made up here at South Bend, all the axes at Alexander and the hoss-shoes

AT KIMES' CORNERS

at Pittsburgh, and they ain't nothin' fer me to do 'cept go and buy these here store shoes and jist nail 'em on—people won't pay fer the shoes I forge out even if they do wear longer. I was jist sittin' here lookin' up and down the road waitin' fer some old buggy to bust down or some old hoss' shoe to come off.

I see by the paper t'other day that these here trusts is goin' to hurry the comin' of the millennium, and it can't come none too soon fer me, fer I don't see what this here world of ourn is comin' to. How's all yer folks, Nat?

Nat Straighter—Oh, they was able to eat breakfast. My daughter, Birtthey, has been laid up with quite a bad spell, but castor oil is a workin' her wonders to p'form—we're great folks fer castor oil at our house. We give 'er in great big doses—'bout as reg'lar as we grease the buggy.

Oh, yes, Joel, by the way, old Eli Yoder is goin' to marry again.

Joel Jessups—Well, well, you don't say, who's it goin' to be this time?

Nat Straighter—One of old Abe Swonks' gals.

AT KIMES' CORNERS

Joel Jessups (slowly and thoughtfully)—Well, I reckon the Lord must be payin' old Abe Swonks fer his sins in son-in-laws!

Nat Straighter—Yes, he come past my place last evenin' at early candle lightin' time as I was out doin' up my barn chores and he was tellin' me. He was on his way out to Two-Mile Church.

Joel Jessups—Why, I didn't know his last woman was dead.

Nat Straighter—Yes, he was sayin' that he had as good a woman as ever lived, and that he'd buried her just six weeks ago that day.

Joel Jessups—How many women has he had, anyway?

Nat Straighter—He's buried four and this'n 'll make five—I reckon he thinks as long as the Lord keeps takin', why he'll keep takin'.

Joel Jessups—I guess you must ferget about the one he married once; seems she come home from the store next day with a washin' machine or a carpet sweeper or some other kind of a work savin' thing, and old Eli he seed that she was goin' to be extravagant and he paid her off and got shed of her.

AT KIMES' CORNERS

Nat Straighter—I was askin' him which one of his women he liked the best, and he was sayin' that he believed fer jist a general rough-and-tumble woman he would take the one he was goin' to get now, but fer genuine love and affection he would take the one layin' over yonder in the Baptist buryin' ground.

You remember once, Joel, he got into a fuss with the jeweler 'bout engravin' the coffin plate fer one of his wives—wasn't goin' to pay him fer it? Said he never finished it—never put a period after the name.

Joel Jessups—They don't generally put periods on coffin plates, do they?

Nat Straighter—I reckon if they ever was a place fer a period on this earth it's on a coffin plate.

Joel Jessups (laughing)—Yes, I reckon that's right.

Nat Straighter (turning completely around slowly and pointing back in the shop)—Oh yes, Joel, I come pretty near fergettin' what I come after. I'd like to borrow that ladder back there in your shop—our house is on fire.

(CURTAIN)

GRANDMA ROSS' STORY

GRANDMA ROSS' STORY

THE old country hotel to you as a boy was the first point of contact—reflex contact—with the world beyond the hill of the home town. There you first saw all the varying specimens of human zoology—every itinerant type from the pursy drummer with a pursy grip, to the showman with an educated pig—usually both gave exhibitions in the hotel dining-room.

There is the same old wet place on the office ceiling—by it you can tell the exact location of the washstand in the sleeping-room above. The same cheap spring-balance clock, surrounded by many crudely lettered glass signs telling travelers to go to Livermore & Bacon for fine meats, Peleg Hosstetter for fine livery, Steve Hankins for fine furniture and undertaking, and Tom Hawk for choice wines, liquors and 15-ball pool.

And the same grease spot is on the wall back of the counter, where the proprietor

GRANDMA ROSS' STORY

rested his head while he sat and dozed waiting for the eight-seventeen night train.

There are the smells of wood smoke, stale tobacco smoke, coal-oil, a musty cellar and country cooking.

You recall an old grandmother back in the family sitting-room before the hearth; how you and the Ross children encircled her arm-chair in the long winter evenings and listened to stories of early days and pioneer life.

Here is one she selected for particularly dark, rainy nights, and told it in a low minor-keyed voice—almost bass, to the accompaniment of sighing winds around the chimney top, rattling shutter-slats and hooting owls and screaming peafowls outside.

"The town wuzn't more'n a settlement in them days. Me an' yer grandfather come through in a prairie schooner from Lancaster, Pennsylvania. We wuz bound for the Illinoy, but heer'd they wuz a-havin' milk-sick bad out there, an' as the land-office wuz here, an' people comin' to take out proof uv their land an' yer grandfather bein' a blacksmith by trade, he concluded to stop here and set up his forge.

GRANDMA ROSS' STORY

"They wuz a saw and gris'-mill too, an' folks used to come an' camp out around the mill while they got their gris' ground.

"Well, the next spring yer grandfather took the money he got from sellin' his land back in the States an' built a part uv this tavern.

"One night some years after, the wind wuz a-blowin' and howlin' around the chimney jist like it is tonight. It had been rainin' fer a week er more an' the roads wuz jist awful. Yer grandfather an' me had jist gone to bed when we heer'd the sounds o' wheels an' a hoss a-splashin' in the road. It got nearer an' nearer. Finally it stopped out in front an' then we heer'd, 'Hel-lo-o-o, hel-lo-o-o the house!'

"It sounded strange and wild—like somebody wuz a-hollerin' down a rain-barrel.

"They wuz talk o' the railroad a-comin' through about that time, the surveyors wuz in town an' so many hard customers skulkin' about that I wuz most afraid to have yer grandfather go out—then again, the house wuz jist as full as a tick an' I didn't see where we'd put anybody else.

GRANDMA ROSS' STORY

"But yer grandfather said he wouldn't let nobody stay out a night like that, no difference ef he had to let 'em sleep in the barn.

"Yer grandfather went down. It wuz an old tinker, an' so drunk that he had to help 'im down out of the wagon.

"After he'd put his hoss and rig away in the barn, I made 'im a shakedown on the garret floor, yer grandfather half carried 'im up, laid 'im down, jerked off his wet clothes an' the tinker wuz sound asleep an' a-snorin' 'fore yer grandfather left him.

"The tinker didn't come down to breakfast, the tinker didn't come down to dinner!

"The fact is, we all forgot about 'im till 'long late in the afternoon yer grandfather happened to go out in the barn an' seed his rig a-standin' there. Then he thought about the tinker, come in the house an' started up to the garret.

"He had no more'n got to the top step 'till yer grandfather turned, staggered, half fell, and then run down the steps hollerin' like an injun.

" 'What on earth is the matter?' I sez.

GRANDMA ROSS' STORY

"He looked at me wild-eyed, a pantin' like a scared hoss, an' he sez, 'Go up an' see fer yerself!'

"I did, an' the sight that met my eyes will be with me 'till my dyin' day.

"There wuz the tinker's skeletin lyin' there on the shakedown, an' his bones wuz licked as clean an' bleached as white as pearl buttons, an'—an'—what do you suppose?

"The rats had et 'im!

"We looked all around the garret, but nary rat could we find. Finally we went over in the back part where we kept the barrels uv extra feathers fer the beds, and they wuz jist 'live with 'em.

"We all went down and heated great soap-kettles full o' boilin' water, an' that day we scalded upwards uv a thousand rats er more.

"We kept the rig 'till the hoss died and the wagon broke down—thinkin' that somebody might come fer 'em some day, but they never did.

"Yer grandfather claimed his chest o' tools fer buryin' the tinker's bones an' his night's lodgin'.

GRANDMA ROSS' STORY

"That's where yer uncle got that fine fiddle—the one with the picture of the castle inlaid on the back an' an old man's head carved on top of the peg-box—it wuz under the seat uv the wagon done up in an oilskin bag."

At this point Grandma would look at the shivering children about her, their horror-stricken countenances, and roll up her knitting as if to retire for the night, but one of the children would remind her that she had not told the part about the tinker's cane.

"Oh, yes," she would say, "I 'most forgot," and then continue:

"Crosswise in the tool-chest wuz a big smooth hickory stick with a ferrule on the end. Yer grandfather thought it was uncommon heavy fer a hickory stick, but he jist put it in the closet upstairs, only carryin' it uv nights when he went out.

"He got to lookin' at it one day and discovered that they wuz a joint in it, an' givin' it a hard twist, the top came off, an' a lot of sawdust flew out.

"He poured the sawdust out on the floor, an' out with it come—

"Fifty Golden Half-Eagles!"

THE COUNTRY PREACHER

THE COUNTRY PREACHER

IN a country town you can always tell the preacher's house. You would naturally suspect that in a country town there would be rich churches and poor churches, just as there are poor and rich people, but not so at all.

All churches are poor in the rural districts; for even those attended by rich and well-to-do people seem to bite off more in the way of a religious campaign than they can chew financially.

They always cut on the poor preacher,—at least he has to stand the deficit in salary arrears.

They used to give what they called pound parties to the preacher's family,—that is, each member would bring a pound of something in the way of household supplies to the parsonage for an evening party. As the result they brought one pound and ate up two, and usually the preacher's family had to go hungry.

THE COUNTRY PREACHER

While we of today may not believe in the doctrines as preached by these men, yet they were honest in what they believed and sacrificed and suffered for their cause. Some of the most pathetic memories of the writer are the results of boyish observations in and around the homes of country preachers.

But to the preacher's house: There is a general transient air about it. The end of the legs of the porch chairs are broken, nailed or wired up; there is usually the earth and pieces from a broken flower pot, together with the remains of a withered plant scattered over the porch floor, where it had been knocked off the window sill by one of a very disorderly lot of young children. There are always dilapidated toys scattered over the front yard which is usually bare of grass. These toys are usually those broken and cast off by the children of the congregation and given to the preacher's offspring.

Usually the children's clothing is that cast off by those of the flock, and very frequently even then it is cut down from the older members of the family to fit the younger ones.

THE COUNTRY PREACHER

A country preacher does much moving about,—he seldom remains more than two years with a charge, and inside his house is the example that three moves are equal to a fire, and if this be true the poor preacher had better have burned his furniture. The carpets are worn and show much cutting in order to fit them to the many sizes of the different rooms they have covered. The patent rocker is off its mooring, the nap is worn from the plush upholstery and the wire springs stick out through the back and seat. The glass of the bookcase is gone years ago, backs and covers hang loose on the books. The vases on the mantel are nicked and cracked; the clock is still and the hour hand gone. Everything is scarred, cracked and broken and troops of kids race through the rooms to add to the disorder.

The preacher's wife has so much to do that she does nothing well. She must bear and rear children, cook, wash and iron, mend and make clothing and all the while keep a smiling face to the women of the flock.

That smile of a country preacher's wife!

THE COUNTRY PREACHER

There is a certain tired way of standing that they have. A weary bend of the knees and a stoop of the shoulders and they grasp their chin in one of their work gnarled hands as they look at you; and through that smile you see an expression of doubt, half hope perhaps, that there is a bliss coming; just beyond this vale of weariness and tears.

Her wardrobe consists of some paper muslin house dresses, and gift aprons, and her Sunday attire consists of one silk dress with many neatly mended rents, a well worn India shawl and black bonnet,—with its white ruching in front and ribbon that ties in a very precise knot under the chin. All her Sunday items of dress are a generation old and no doubt a part of her wedding outfit.

There are always collections being taken and entertainments given to get the preacher something, but no one ever seems to give the poor wife anything new.

The writer very distinctly remembers of once giving a small sum together with other members of a Sunday school class for the purpose of getting the preacher's teeth fixed.

THE COUNTRY PREACHER

In the old days back home, there was a great hurrying among the women of the flock about this time of year to get the preacher a new overcoat.

They would go among the country merchants of the town; one would donate the cloth, another the lining, and another the buttons and findings; the tailor of the town would cut it to measure and the women of the committee would meet in the afternoon at one of their homes and sew it up.

It was never a very creditable garment; for obviously the merchants gave that towards it which they could not sell.



Years ago the writer's parents used to belong to a little church over on the corner of Blackford and Vermont Streets in Indianapolis. The congregation were saving so hard to "burn the mortgage" that they were sparing even to the point of light and fuel.

The mid-week or prayer meetings were being held each Thursday night around in the homes of different members of the congregation who had large houses. The writer's family home was a big old white house with

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porches built around it until it looked like a Mississippi River steamboat, and when it came his family's turn chairs were carried in from the neighbors.

Everybody was there. The room was close and stuffy with that usual country-church smell added to the stale pancake smoke of the dining-room, and with mixed smells of freshly ironed clothes, and that odor that arises from gentlemen who care for their own horses.

One old man who was always in evidence and whom all the children called Grandpa Pope was the type of the very early pious German emigrant. He had a white whisker fringe around the lower part of his face which seemed to grow up from under his collar rather than out of his neck. He was also a thrifty type who wore white shirts, black clothes, morocco top boots and who smoked a long stemmed pipe around home with a china bowl as big as a hotel cream pitcher.

He used to lick his boys for cursing and during the chastisement he himself cursed in an obscure German dialect that nobody could understand.

THE COUNTRY PREACHER

On this particular night the room was full; even the space behind the old time Franklin stove that burned squirrel holes was occupied by the two-story-and-a-basement family tom cat who was curled up into the dimensions of a four dollar roast of beef.

The religious part of the meeting was over and Brother Van Camp arose in the discussion of church finances with some elaborate plan of "burning the mortgage." Brother Van Camp, by the way, was father of the present well advertised pork and bean outfit. When he subsided Grandpa Pope rose. Grandpa was rather hard of hearing and talked very loud and in a dialect that would serve as a model for any German comedian. He held his head high and haughty with the air of confidence displayed by pious people who have the assurance of being on the right side of things spiritual.

He said: Brother Van Camp is always talking about money, money, money and not enough about—

Just the moment that Grandpa Pope had finished the word "about" the cat jumped up from behind the stove in the throes of a fit.

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He jumped over the heads and shoulders of the "worshipers," climbed up a lace curtain, roosted at the top of a curtain pole, its tail the dimensions of a pine tree cone, and sat there and hissed at the congregation.

What Grandpa Pope said in finishing his statement had this effect:

Brother Van Camp is always talking about money, money, money—and not enough about—Jesus Christ look at that cat!

AUTUMN

AUTUMN

A BACK platform seat on a local day train down through Summit, Stark, Wayne, Holmes and Knox counties, Ohio, affords a view of a complete nature-drama divided into gigantic acts in which all the elements of landscape appear.

As the train winds around the slopes, down grades and up again, through cuts and over trestles, there is a constant arrangement and rearrangement of sky, hills, fields, streams and forests in a great creative symphony of greens and greys, blues and browns, with now and then dashes and daubs of yellow and red—made vivid here by cloud-shuttered sunlight, there overlayed and toned down by the gauze-like purple mist of late autumn.

The long sounding lines of the hill sway and sweep against the sky, now lowering, now raising, swinging with each other, then against each other, across and finally into the dim distance—and all plumed at the top with trees in scarlet and gold.

AUTUMN

Now into the open country of grey-green pastures, relieved only by gnarled orchard trees, rail and hedge fences, shocked corn, stacked straw and grazing sheep.

Through the dark woods with the resounding rush and whistle of the train. The vine-twined tree trunks that appear as supporting columns to a roof of branches and twigs and remaining leaves. The brush and bushes, the frost-burned floor of grasses ornamented by layers of fallen foliage, and set with still water pools reflecting the many-colored bower above in painter's palette splotches. There is a sycamore tree here and there—its white body and branches standing like a spectre tree among its neighbors of the forest.

The train rushes through a cut in the right of way. There are bare brown banks close to each side to obscure the view,—like curtains. But wait a minute! It is only the dark house before the opening of the grand final act in the nature-drama.

You emerge to view a many-mile valley below. There are more sweeping and swinging lines of hills against the sky in positive confusion, with brown strips of wagon roads

AUTUMN

winding around them; fields in the foreground divided by fences and silver ribbon streams. The sun rushes down from a clear sky in a total glory of light, and the yellow and gold and red of the tree-plumed knolls, with a purple gauze-like mist, are carried up where they are all merged and blended in the heavens.

The train slows down.

The nature-drama is over.

Now you are passing out of a great original park system where the great open air drama of real life has been going on, and out into the streets of man where he creates in all ugliness of selfish hate born of fear.

Where nature's hand lays off beauty quits; where man's hand lays on ugliness begins.

The train stops.

There is a smoke-drab wooden station.

Standing on the platform are some Rufe Yoders, Bill Skidmores, Newt Plumes, Cyrus Planks and Hank McGees. Most of them are scratching their shins with their boot heels.

There are a number of wooden houses scattered over the level ground forming the

limits of the town—they are all set very low on the foundations in order to save any permanent material such as brick or stone. Up the street is a man on a ladder at the side of a new frame store, nailing on sheets of red tin stamped out to appear like rock-faced stone work. Still further up the way is a brick church with two very tall towers on each side and a round window between filled with plain glass stained with red, white and blue paint in imitation of cathedral glass. Over the other way is an iron-fenced graveyard with all the mounds well formed and sodded, evergreen trees planted, a Scotch granite or white marble monument over every grave and geometrical beds show where flowers bloomed last summer.

The train starts out again and you are soon drawn out of man's ugliness into the hills, fields and forests where all is beauty.

Now why is all this?

Why does man, surrounded as he is in this chain system of natural parks, abounding in both big beauties and simple sweetness, reflect only barren ugliness and inefficiency in his own creations?

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